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ABSTRACT

The changing economic and social situation, the rapid expansion of technology, and the explosion of available knowledge are fundamentally altering the world economy. Today, our nation's students need not only basic skills, but higher level reasoning and communication and thinking ability, as well. In Connecticut, a committee was formed to determine the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that constitute an "educated person" and that should be required of the state's public secondary school graduates. The result, entitled "Connecticut's Common Core of Learning," completed in November 1986, identifies and documents the attributes and attitudes, the skills and competencies, and the understandings and applications that are to be expected of the state's public secondary school graduates. In essence, because the committee shared the document with educators before its completion and carefully considered their responses to the drafts, plans for implementation began before the document was even adopted by the State Board of Education. Included within this document are examples from Killingly, Groton, Bridgeport, and Glastonbury that illustrate the focuses and working methods that are making the core a reality. The appendices contain a copy of the April 1988 Connecticut State Department of Education "Challenge Update" and examples of study questions concerning student learning. (KM)

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POLICY MAKING WITH A DIFFERENCE: THE STORY OF CONNECTICUT'S COMMON CORE OF LEARNING

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PREFACE

This report is for education policy influencers -- those who shape the course or method of action that guides education decisions.

From spring 1986 through spring 1988, we had the unique opportunity to walk alongside people in Connecticut who are refocusing the education system on a richer and fuller range of learning for all students. During this time, we watched the development and initial implementation of a state board policy that specifies clearly and succinctly what secondary school graduates should know and be able to do. The intent of our participation was two-fold: to link the new policy under development -- the Common Core of Learning -- to local action; and to better understand what constitutes effective state policy making by observing and talking to those involved in the effort. Participation included being a part of the informal groups that developed the implementation approach (revolving around the blue-ribbon committee process that developed the Core and a consortium of districts and other agencies ready to use it). It also included assisting at consortium meetings, interviewing people about progress, and meeting with state leaders to consider ways to make the policy as useful as possible.

In watching the development and initial implementation of the Common Core of Learning, it became clear that there were special features of this setting and process that went far beyond simply linking policy development and implementation more closely. The Core is not a mandate, it is an invitation to focus on -- indeed, to discuss and debate -- the content of schooling for all the state's young people. Even before the policy statement was completed, state and local educators and others were using it as a yardstick -- a vision -- of what education should -- and could -- become. As such, it has taken hold in a manner markedly different from the way most state policy is enacted, either in the development or the implementation stages. This document focuses on some of the factors leading to this improved state education policy environment, its consequences, how people are talking about it and what seems to be necessary to sustain and build it.

We had two goals in preparing this report:

- For people in Connecticut, our goal is to reflect a way of viewing and talking about their reform efforts that will focus the nature of the debate, provide another perspective and encourage people in any and all parts of the education system to persist and redouble their efforts.

- For people outside Connecticut, our goal is to provide a way to think about their climate of education reform -- be it at the state or local level -- and consider with their colleagues how they can play a role in education reform in a way that directs energy and attention toward better learning for all students.

We wish to thank Gerald Tirozzi, Norma Foreman Glasgow and Gary King for extending the invitation to us to be involved in Connecticut; Theodore Sergi and Elizabeth Schmitt for their acceptance of us as a part of their team to develop the implementation approach for the new policy; Lorraine Aronson, Joan Baron, Susan Bucknell, Wanda DuPuy, Pascal Forgione, Merle Harris, Douglas Rindone, Larry Schaefer and Betty Sternberg for their willingness to allow us to observe and discuss with them their approach to statewide implementation over the year or two following

the passage of the Common Core of Learning policy; Russell Beale, Jeanne Brown, Raymond Fillion, Ronald Furr, Susan Girard, Rose Marie Munch, Harold Rocketto, Dominic Spera and K. Michael Talbot (Ella Grasso); John Fulso, Rick Hoskins, Ann Jurecic and Catherine Sampson (Killingly); William Glass (Bridgeport); Jackie Jacoby, Steve Tegarden and Larry Tivin (Glastonbury) for their views and reviews of what has been presented here about their schools and districts; and the many educators and policy makers within the legislature, districts, schools, regional service centers, higher education institutions and state agencies and associations who also responded to our questions and shaped our thinking.

This effort was supported by a special grant from the Danforth Foundation to the Education Commission of the States. Preparation of the document also was partially supported by funds from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Beverly Anderson, Education Commission of the States
Pat Cox, The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands
Carleen O'Connell, Western Organization Consultants

SUMMARY

The reform movement to date has fostered the recognition that the increasing change and complexity of today's world requires that all students be educated beyond basic skills. Graduates of all our schools must know how to use their minds well if this country is to be sustained into the 21st century. Moreover, there is the realization that change is not only inevitable, it is ongoing, and that our response to change must provide for the continual improvement of all parts of the education system -- not only in schools and colleges, but at the district and state level as well. Higher-order learning for all kids and organizing for ongoing change mark major shifts in our assumptions about education and require reframing of mindsets as well as retooling of actions if we are to effect true reform.

Policy Making with a Difference: The Story of Connecticut's Common Core of Learning presents a look at how education leaders in the state of Connecticut have signaled these shifts in assumptions and the implications for action through both the process and product of policy development and implementation. The Connecticut approach revolves around the "blue-ribbon" committee process that developed the Common Core of Learning -- a state board of education adopted statement of what high school graduates should know and be able to do – and the consortium of schools, districts, regional service centers, higher education institutions and the state department of education that have worked to bring the Core to life. In addition, there was a cross-agency group of state department staff and others who concentrated from the beginning on implementation issues.

These familiar structures and processes were used in new ways to produce new outcomes. Among the desired outcomes articulated by education leaders at all levels in Connecticut were four important characteristics of the general policy environment of a continually improving system based on higher-order learning for all kids. Such a policy environment:

- Raises expectations for those involved in the education system, adults and the young alike;
- Builds coherence within the system;
- Stimulates action; and
- Emphasizes the necessity of collaboration and shared responsibility among stakeholders – all those affected by the education system – toward its ongoing improvement aimed at higher-order learning for all students.

The pages that follow describe how these characteristics of the policy environment have been enhanced by the development and implementation, to date, of the Common Core of Learning.

INTRODUCTION

America needs an education system in which all students not only acquire more skills but skills that are different than those the current system provides. Equity and excellence can no longer be a "one or the other" proposition. All students must be able to both read and discern complex meanings. They must not only compute right answers but be able to quickly estimate possible options. They must not only memorize text but also be able to take responsibility for their work and personal lives and set high goals for themselves. They must develop reflective and productive thinking skills and attitudes, be able to work with others and share responsibility for their own learning. In short, all students need not just basic skills, but higher level reasoning, communication and thinking capability.

There are many reasons for this urgent need: the shifting economic and social situation, the declining number of young people who will be entering the work force, the rapid expansion of technology, the explosion of available knowledge. These conditions are fundamentally changing the world economy and are threatening America's ability to maintain a democratic society. Ambitious world competitors, lacking the mineral and natural resources that gave this country an advantage in a manufacturing economy, have created a different advantage for themselves as they move into the 21st century. They are educating their youth with the intellectual skills and self-discipline to succeed in the information, service and technological economy.

As the nation attempts to deal with economic challenges, Americans also are faced with the challenges of a changing social fabric. More and more citizens are disconnected from the social institutions and values that have been instrumental in shaping this democratic society. Consequently, there is a growing sense of the need to focus on the development of engaged citizens as well as productive workers.

Leaders confronting this situation have begun to recognize that some fundamental changes are needed to be able to provide students with the education they need. It's not just a matter of doing more of the same or even doing the same things better. It's doing things entirely differently.

In recent years, leaders have created policies and taken action to give a quantitative push and elevate achievement scores. While these policies have raised scores in many instances and have captured the attention of students, educators and citizens, few people claim that they are adequate for the challenge facing us: they have been necessary but not sufficient. The policy strategies to make higher learning a reality may well need to be different from those that raised scores on skills the education system already was designed to impart.

The kind of changes needed are neither clear-cut nor simple. In order to meet students' changing needs, schools must become more adaptable and better able to respond to change as a normal part of the education enterprise. Static, centralized plans will not solve the dynamic problems schools face today. Instead of considering problems in light of system constraints, pressure is building for a shift away from bureaucratic controls in

the management of schools. The difficulty inherent in this shift in thinking is that the management systems that would replace bureaucratic controls are not apparent.

Alternatives to traditional controls are, however, the subject of fledgling experiments in many states and school districts. These experiments are of critical interest to policy makers, educators and concerned citizens seeking to understand the changes needed. It is at this point that sharing the experiences of those engaged in new processes is especially important.

Recent events in Connecticut have provided an opportunity to determine what these generalities mean and how they play out in real life. The pages that follow present a picture of how people in Connecticut have attempted to put these conditions in place. The story in Connecticut is not perfect: mistakes have been made, actions have not been taken, perspectives have been confused and misdirected at times. Indeed, without continuous attention and leadership, the vision and its potential impact are at risk of petering out, never to have impact on many of the children in the state. Yet many positive steps have been taken that need to be highlighted and encouraged to develop and expand.

At this point in the policy development and implementation stage, perceptions within Connecticut about the Common Core of Learning vary widely. Two purposes are served by the following report about the Common Core's development. The first is to further broaden the debate about the Common Core, what it may mean to the citizens of Connecticut, and how it should be used. The second is to signal new directions for policy making, in which those who design policy avoid constrictive mandates, but instead stake out a direction while leaving room to maneuver as shifting circumstances dictate.

THE CONNECTICUT STORY: BACKGROUND

Connecticut, like most states, is experiencing multiple changes simultaneously. Its cities are attracting newcomers from many cultures, many of whom are not educated in even their native languages. At the same time, the nature of work opportunities increasingly is being divided into high-paying jobs that require technical or other advanced skills, and low-paying jobs that require minimum skills. As the number of low-income families grows, the number of at-risk children and youth also increases. These shifts are creating a state of stark contrasts. According to the state department of education's five-year plan, there are actually two Connecticuts: one wealthy with many advantages, the other poor, made up largely of minorities and shut off from opportunities. Statewide mastery testing has revealed great disparities in skills and competencies of students in communities of different economic levels.

Recognizing the seriousness of the shifting social and economic conditions of the state, Governor William O'Neill encouraged the development of Jobs for Connecticut's Future -- a public/private initiative that produced a report identifying the kinds of jobs that will be available in Connecticut over the next decade and the skills and education necessary to fill them. The report points out that "Connecticut needs to approach education, training and management in ways that enhance critical thinking and interpersonal abilities, as well as knowledge."

Along with the push for education changes based on the economic situation was the push from those concerned about equity. Educators and other statewide leaders recognized the need to move forcefully toward providing equity and excellence of school experience for all students. The focus needs to be not only on basic skills, but on higher-order learning for all, at the same time that basic skills are being acquired. As one teacher put it, every student should have a chance to learn "the good stuff."

Attempts to reframe the problems of education and understand the changes needed led to a pivotal question -- what should an educated citizen know and be able to do? In other words, what kinds of outcomes should be expected from the K-12 experience?

The Common Core of Learning (CCL) Committee was formed to answer this question. The CCL Committee was an outgrowth of the work of previous advisory committees to the state board of education and the commissioner including the Graduation Requirements Committee and the Superintendents' Discussion Group on Equal Educational Opportunity.

On January 8, 1987, newspapers across Connecticut announced that the state board of education had adopted the Common Core of Learning "as its standard of an educated citizen and as its policy on the skills, knowledge and attitudes that are expected of Connecticut's public secondary school graduates." Two weeks later, teams of educators and board members from 20 districts across the state, regional service centers and state agencies met to form the Common Core of Learning Consortium. As a consortium, they announced their intent to make the Core a reality in their location.

Connecticut's Common Core of Learning is a document that identifies the skills, knowledge and attitudes expected of public secondary school graduates. It is organized under three major headings with subheadings that reflect significant groups of attitudes, skills and knowledge:

- Attributes and attitudes: self-concept, motivation and persistence, responsibility and self-reliance, intellectual curiosity, interpersonal relations, sense of community, moral and ethical values.

- Skills and competencies: reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing, quantitative skills, reasoning and problem solving, learning skills.

- Understandings and applications: the arts, careers and vocations, cultures and languages, history and social sciences, literature, mathematics, physical development and health, science and technology.

As important as the Core itself, however, are its preamble and epilogue. It is in the preamble that it is made clear that high expectations are held for all students: "We further believe that these skills, knowledge and attitudes constitute a set of expectations that all students can achieve regardless of diverse learning rates and styles. . . . Connecticut's Common Core of Learning reflects a commitment to excellence in public elementary and secondary education and to high expectations of all our students."

The epilogue emphasizes that making the Core a reality is a responsibility shared among many. "The expectation that each student can and should achieve the Common Core of Learning . . . will require schools to change. . . . This change emerges only when all of society shares a vision of what ought to be and expresses a sense of urgency for the need to act. . . . For this vision to become a reality, many different groups should take action. Educators, parents, other citizens, community organizations, employers and others should use the Common Core of Learning (CCL) in a variety of ways." The charge is not left ambiguous. The policy then identifies 12 concrete examples of ways to act, including examples for any and all groups in Connecticut that share the responsibility for education -- local boards, teachers, administrators, higher education, the state department of education, employers, students, parents, community members and others. (See Appendix A for further information on the CCL.)

The Common Core did not spring suddenly to life. Important conditions and people converged at a time when citizens and educators were sensing the deep need to establish a focus and vision for the education system that would guide them through the rough waters of change.

The CCL also illustrates the evolution of the state's role over the last 10 to 15 years. According to a district director of staff development: "The CCL does not reflect a recent change [in the way the state department of education develops policy], but it is a major change over the last 10 to 15 years. The State Department of Education gives others an opportunity to participate in the development of a project. Things are much more decentralized, there is much more of a dialogue being fostered."

The Common Core of Learning itself is one strand of a long-range goal of the state department of education and other actors in education: to define equal educational opportunity as a part of simultaneously enacting equity and excellence for all. One part of the strand has been to define the inputs to schooling; the Standards Committee has addressed that, looking at resources and staffing. The Common Core of Learning has focused on the outcomes of schooling. A critical part of the outcomes must be that however assessment is done, the performance of subgroups -- whether based on race or gender -- will not be expected to differ from average scores of the whole.

CREATING A STATEWIDE VISION OF AN EDUCATED PERSON

The significance of the Common Core of Learning is as much in how it was developed as in its content, for it is in its development that the vision began to be a shared one. This kind of sharing encourages learning and establishes a commitment to action.

The Core, the members of which are listed in the table below, was developed by a blue-ribbon panel but not in traditional committee isolation. Table 1 lists the members of the Committee. The CCL Committee drew on the best of information available nationally, they interacted with educators and the public throughout, they involved the state department staff who would be instrumental in making it a reality, and they worked simultaneously on an implementation strategy. Above all, they never lost their commitment to excellence and their ability to ask the hard questions.

The relatively small size of the committee and the previous experience of many members contributed to a highly competent operation. Many members had participated in previous policy development efforts and knew where the Core fit in the context of overall statewide policy. The members represented multiple constituencies in the state; from students, parents and the community to teachers, administrators and board members. The chairs, for example, were picked to represent higher education and business: the two groups with an essential perspective on what high school graduates need to know and be able to do.

TABLE 1

Common Core of Learning Committee

John T. Casteen III, President, The University of Connecticut, Co-chair
Badi G. Foster, President, The Aetna Institute for Corporate Education, Co-chair
Joan Carter, President, T and T Inc.
Joseph J. Cirasuolo, Superintendent, Clinton Public Schools
Fernando Comulada, Vice President for Latin American and International Division Connecticut Bank and Trust Company
Joseph J. Crisco, Jr., Director of Governmental Affairs, United Technologies
Jennifer C. Goldberg, State Student Advisory Council
Marie S. Gustin, Superintendent, New Britain Public Schools
Lee Hay, 1983 Connecticut and National Teacher of the Year, Manchester Public Schools
Raymond Lenoue, President, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
Julia McNamara, President, Albertus Magnus College
Peg Perillie, President, Parent-Teacher Association of Connecticut, Inc.
David J. Quattropani, Assistant Superintendent, Newtown Public Schools
Helen Regan, Coordinator, Secondary Teacher Certification Program, Connecticut College
Emma Jean Stepherson, Principal, Bassick High Schools, Bridgeport Public School
Betty Tianti, President, Connecticut State AFL-CIO
Deborah Gladding Willard, 1986 Connecticut Teacher of the Year, Glastonbury Public Schools
N. Patricia Yarborough, President, Post College

Ex Officio

Norma Foreman Glasgow, Commissioner of Higher Education
Gerald N. Tirozzi, Commissioner of Education

Contributing Alternate Members

Nat Bates and Barry Williams, Connecticut State AFL-CIO
Merle Harris, Department of Higher Education
David Suisman, State Student Advisory Council

Another aspect of the development process that helped the committee steadily focus and refocus toward the outcome was the interplay between it and the state department team that was supporting it. The team, comprised of a cross-section of staff, brought multiple perspectives to the development effort. The multiple perspectives, however, were always integrated prior to presentation to the Committee. The lead staff person for the committee described the process this way:

> It's my job to take what seems the best of seven different staff points of view and give that to the committee and let them either buy it or modify it. I'd have to say in most cases they never bought anything we gave them; they really smoothed things around and redefined things. It's theirs then. That's really what you've asked them to do. They really created what the final product is.

The state department team worked to set the conditions that would encourage debate and discussion as the committee steadily worked toward the finished product. From the first meeting in 1986, the state department staff and the co-chairs of the committee discussed issues among themselves and urged the committee to debate not only the content of the Core but also the shape of the product. The relationship between what was being said and how it was being said created a healthy tension throughout the development process and focused it from the beginning on the desired outcome: to produce a usable document that would change education in Connecticut.

It was also clear that both equity and excellence were essential. In other words, the goal was to develop high standards that all of Connecticut's students would be expected to achieve.

The committee was building on significant work that had already been done in Connecticut and through national and regional research efforts. Thus, while the task was a major one, the committee members, because of the broad membership of the committee and its use of national networks and consultants, had the advantage of seeing how the debate was being framed in other places and in other ways. As a result, they were able to bring to their discussions a considerable base of knowledge.

The final product was meant to guide the school improvement efforts of all the participants in the educational enterprise, not by mandate, but by the strength of the ideas contained in it. Developing a shared vision for the outcomes of schooling meant creating a document that could serve as a focus for local goals and student objectives, for curriculum and instruction, for professional development programs and for redesign of student assessment and program evaluation. The document had to be, above all, solid and usable.

The committee had only 10 months to conduct and complete its work. The short time frame was necessary so that the committee's work would be completed in time to be most helpful to school districts as they reviewed their goals, due to the state department of education in July 1987. This forced the group to remain committed to understanding their differences of opinion, resolving conflicts and constantly moving the project forward. Each of the nine meetings of the committee focused on moving the product forward, not on general discussion.

In a number of cases opinions of group members were diametrically opposed right from the start. But, even with the different perspectives, the committee found common ground. Because of the body of knowledge that existed on the topic of what students should know, the members debated about resource documents and their contents rather than one another's perspectives. For example, committee members were asked to each identify their top three resources out of those provided. The state department staff then took the top five from the voting and arranged them in chart form. By identifying how the articles were similar and how they were different, the debate was somewhat reframed -- there were more similarities than differences.

In this way the committee debated and determined the major sections of Connecticut's Common Core of Learning. Perhaps the most important and time-consuming was the preamble, which states the purpose of the document. Committee members had to come to grips with the fundamental nature of the document. One member recalls, "Someone would say, 'This is a curriculum project, isn't it?' and someone else would say, 'Wait a minute, I want to assess student outcomes here.' Is this a student achievement project or it is a curriculum project? Who do we hold these up to: teachers who are teaching certain curriculum? Or do we hold these as a set of standards up against every graduate of our public high school?"

By May 1986, the committee had hammered out the vision of the Core by focusing on the major issues to be addressed in the preamble with the main points under each. These issues were outlined in the form of four questions: What is the purpose of the CCL? What are the underlying assumptions? What does the CCL represent? And how will the CCL be used?

The answers to these questions shaped Connecticut's Common Core of Learning. The purpose of the document, and of the committee itself, was to rethink how learning is defined. Among the critical assumptions underlying the document is the need for multi-dimensionality, a view of learning based on the whole child. Inclusion of students' attitudes and attributes, for example, adds dimension to the definition of learning. The Common Core of Learning represents a first step in articulating a vision of successful schooling in this broader context. The document is to be used to make that vision real by acknowledging a larger range for success -- attaining basic skills is only a piece of the expectations rather than the whole of it. The preamble sets out the premises that the Core is for all students, that outcomes should focus on the whole child, and the outcomes are based on the total educational experience, not just curriculum.

In June, 1986, committee members reviewed a draft preamble and an outline of Connecticut's Common Core of Learning. Over the summer, the committee staff drafted the text of the document, which was presented at a pivotal September meeting. Some sections were easier to draft than others. For example, only a few resources offered solid material that could be used for the attributes and attitudes section, while there was plenty of expertise available on curriculum topics. In reviewing the items and debating inclusion or deletion, one criterion the committee members used was, "Would I want this for my child?" The final draft of the Core was ready in November 1986.

The many outreach activities that the committee and staff team conducted also informed the development of the Core, beginning from the start of the committee's work. These included but went far beyond the public hearings that are usually held to obtain

reactions to a finished policy. At the first committee meeting in March 1986, the committee told their lead staff person that they wanted to talk to teachers. "They forced me to do that . . . and I was ticked. I thought, 'Here we are giving you all these documents, you've got the greatest staff in the world that can give you anything you want. Just start banging it out!'

In April 1986, committee members and staff visited Glastonbury High School, Hartford High School, and Middlebrook Elementary School in Trumbull; in each setting there was a lively give-and-take on the content, meaning and use of the Core. "It turned out the places we went to were very helpful and it helped shape the committee's views. [For example], a little elementary school staff played out this whole issue of self-concept and that affected things heavily."

The same schools were visited again in September, this time to discuss the draft of the Core. Visiting a variety of settings over time enabled the committee members to see across curricular domains, understand the interplays with assessment, and view the potential for implementation in these very different types and sizes of school systems. These school visits were a departure from the usual task force work in that the committee members talked to school people in their own environments instead of asking teachers and administrators to come to committee meetings.

The school visits were just the beginning. Committee members and staff attended dozens of other meetings, fostering exchange and debate in each. In this way, most of the major constituencies around the state not only had input but became aware of the development of the Core and its potential. In addition, the committee staff circulated literally thousands of copies of the draft preamble and outline and then the draft Core to individuals and organizations around the state. They received hundreds of responses, some focusing on the content of the Core, some on its use, some on its assessment. This input was all used by the committee as it shaped the final document.

In the end, the CCL Committee successfully resisted a temptation common to the policy making arena -- the temptation to prescribe. The committee's process did not fracture into any narrow focus on pedagogy or special interests or scarce economics. Committee members tolerated high levels of tension until an integrative approach was achieved.

Confronted with pressure to translate the Common Core into some kind of action plan, the committee chose instead to add an epilogue. It is here that one of the most striking differences between the Connecticut experience and the usual policy making becomes clear.

The epilogue is simple on the surface -- it merely suggests a dozen ways that local boards, teachers and administrators, districts, institutions of higher education, state and local government officials, students, parents and community members might each think about the meaning of the CCL and use it to reflect on what they do and how they do it. But behind this deceptively simple suggestion is a powerful message for those who choose to hear it. The message is that each of these groups and individuals are trusted to stop and think for themselves about their work. The message is that individual and collective reflection is the way to achieve the high expectations embedded in the CCL. The message is that all of the people involved in education have the power, the responsibility and the tools to change.

Why Is It So Powerful?

Statewide systems do not change overnight by a single policy, but one can add strategically to the momentum of change that has begun. The power of the CCL appears to derive from the fact that:

- It is one strand of an overarching strategy to effect change in multiple dimensions.
- It targets all students, not a particular special population.
- It focuses on outcomes in students -- what they should exhibit, be able to do -- rather than inputs or processes of education such as programs or course offerings.
- It focuses on a full range of outcomes for students, not just basic or minimum skills.
- It includes descriptions of successful outcomes of schooling in the affective domain, such as those represented in the attitudes and attributes section.
- It is aimed at maximum potential of the student, not minimum competency.
- It goes beyond those aspects of schooling that can be measured quantitatively.
- It is linked to what has gone on before in the state.
- It focuses on the whole student, not a single aspect.
- It involves bringing together an emerging vision in an articulate way so people begin to use a common language about the essence of education – what students should know and be able to do. It is designed to infuse meaning and give focus to planning and operations rather than be a stand-alone or add on.
- It clearly suggests that multiple organizations and different types of role groups need to participate to successfully implement its contents.
- It has implications of potentially vast dimensions for change not only in schools and districts, but also the state department of education, higher education and throughout the entire system.
- Its development and implementation is based on fostering a range of uses and personal responsibility rather than mandating compliance.
- Its message is subtle but the implications for deep implementation are extremely complex and in fact amount to system reconfiguration to make possible the desired outcomes.
- It acknowledges the difficulty of the task and is committed to the long haul rather than the quick fix.

STIMULATING MOMENTUM THROUGHOUT THE SYSTEM

The changes implied by Connecticut's Common Core of Learning are immense, and making those expectations a reality is a long-term commitment. If the state department of education had been less committed to the project, if the CCL Committee members had been less determined to consider implementation, if the educators and citizens of Connecticut had been less willing to take responsibility for thinking about the Common Core and experimenting with its ideas, it might all have ended as simply another interesting concept.

But it hasn't happened that way. Within two weeks of the document's adoption by the state board of education, a consortium of 20 school systems voluntarily began implementing the Core in a variety of ways. Table 2 lists the members of the CCL Consortium. How was this kind of enthusiasm generated? What contributed to this collective expression of willingness to experiment with the CCL? What did implementation mean?

TABLE 2

The Common Core Of Learning Consortium

School Districts	State Department
Avon	Hartford
Bridgeport	
Bristol	
Clinton	**Regional Service Centers**
Danbury	
Darien	Capitol Regional Educational Council
East Lyme	(CREC - Windsor)
Fairfield	
Falls Village	Regional Educational Services Concepts
Glastonbury	through Unified Effort (RESCUE) - Litchfield
Groton	
Hartford	Area Cooperative Education Services
Killingly	(ACES) - Hamden
Manchester	
Meriden	Cooperative Education Services (CES) - Fairfield
Naugatuck	
New Milford	E. Connecticut Regional Educational Service Center -
Norwich	(EASTCONN) - N. Windham
Prospect	
Trumbull	Project Learn - E. Lyme
Wolcott	Connecticut Affiliate - ASCD - Hartford

Part of the answer is that momentum towards implementation of the Common Core began shortly after the CCL Committee began its work. An informal cross-role group was formed in the summer of 1986 to work with the state department of education staff on developing an implementation approach. Also working with this group were staff from the Education Commission of the States and The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands.

The discussions that took place among members of this group tended to focus on efforts already going on across the state, and developing ways to integrate these efforts with the work of the CCL Committee became an important priority. The implementation group reasoned that the improvement efforts underway could be both validated and strengthened by the Common Core of Learning.

In these ways, the committee members and state department staff began to think about use of the document, about implementation of its contents, right from the beginning of the development process. As the lead staff member reminisced with the implementation group in early 1987, after Connecticut's Common Core of Learning had been adopted by the state board of education: "At the time [early 1986], I didn't want to schedule any more meetings, I didn't want to talk to anybody else, and I didn't want to debate a lot of issues with another group of people. Frankly, we just would have been thinking about implementation now had you people not been here. From the beginning, the ECS/Regional Lab relationship was one of use and implementation."

Finally, the committee's outreach effort played a crucial role beyond information gathering -- it stimulated awareness of and interest in the CCL during the development process. By its willingness to "share" the document before its completion and to carefully consider responses to the drafts, the committee harnessed a strategic kind of momentum for change.

In essence, plans for implementation began before the document was even adopted by the state board of education. The early lessons being learned by those gearing up for implementation contributed to the final development of the Common Core of Learning. The descriptions below provide examples of what districts and others have done in the CCL Consortium to begin to make the Core a reality. These examples were chosen to illustrate the kinds of focus and ways of working that seem to be moving the Core forward.

Killingly

Killingly is located at the eastern edge of Connecticut, along the Rhode Island border. Isolated from the more densely populated parts of the state until a major freeway was put in a few years ago, Killingly has only recently begun to see change. Traditionally, about a third of its high school graduates went on to a four-year college; most of the young people went to work or into the military. Now, new people moving into the community and other factors have combined to cause the school system to take a look at its program and the impact on students.

The principal at Killingly High School describes how she became interested in the CCL. "We've got just a ton of things going on at one time, including a visit from an accreditation team in October 1988. We thought that maybe the structure of the Common Core would help us pull all these things together." I said, "Gee, this would be a really wonderful thing. Let's do it!" I have a very willing staff. The people that I chose to be involved are really the informal leaders of the school. In fact, at least three teacher members of the CCL Committee have also been involved in the accreditation self-study, so the Core is explicitly mentioned in the accreditation report.

"Everything in this system has always been very reactive. We are for the first time trying to develop a proactive approach to planning and growth and change. The system is using a planning process by developing five-year goals. Part of our five-year program is to look at where we're going as a school system, not just as a high school. We're just really at the very, very beginning of a process that will take several years. I see [the CCL] becoming a strand [throughout the district], as we develop curriculum and expectations for youngsters all the way through."

According to the principal, Killingly had not taken part in a statewide initiative before. Given its relative isolation, membership in the Common Core of Learning Consortium was viewed as a way to build "closer connections" to other districts. "We thought the Common Core Consortium would be an ideal way to network with people at the state and with other communities that are around us."

English is the first area Killingly is working on. The three teachers of junior English decided to make their classes more interesting and hit upon the idea of interdisciplinary learning. During the summer of 1987, they began to make plans for changing their classes in the new school year.

The teachers have particularly tried to break the thinking that only the upper-level students should get all the "good stuff." Self-concept is a major focus of their work, especially with kids in the vocational and general studies programs. "The whole list of attitudes and attributes [in the CCL] is really important stuff. I think our talking about students' self-concepts makes them aware of morals and moral decision making in forming the society for tomorrow. We're really preparing them for that; that's the purpose of the Common Core of Learning."

The teachers decided there would be four interdisciplinary projects per year, each containing a type of writing focus as well as connecting subjects. The English-Science connection has already been fostered in some preliminary ways. For example, as science project oral report time approached, the science teacher contacted the English teachers and coordinated with them so that students would be able to organize and write their presentations with the support of their English class.

In another project, the Voc-Prep students read On the Beach, a powerful 1950's novel about nuclear war. "Reading a 300-page book is something they never thought they would do, let alone enjoy." They also saw the film and worked on developing critiquing skills by comparing the film and the book. They did research on nuclear weapons, reactors, radiation and fallout in conjunction with their science class. "The librarian was the key to all these resources. She worked overtime to help out on all of this."

How did the Common Core fit into these changes? According to a Killingly staff member, "Nobody said, 'Here's this document: go create.' We created and then along came this document. Then the CCL team said 'This fits right in with what we're doing.'" Another teacher commented, "I felt so good when I read the Core document because at last I found something that agrees with my philosophy."

Ella Grasso

Ella T. Grasso-Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School, located on the shore of Long Island Sound in Groton, is the only vocational-technical school in the CCL Consortium. At the end of the 1986-87 school year, the entire faculty of about 100 staff met to discuss "Connecticut's Common Core of Learning." The scheduling of the meeting signaled its importance: the school day was designated an early release day, allowing the faculty to meet for two hours. The director provided lunch for the entire staff and more than doubled the usual lunch period to 45 minutes. Each faculty member was provided with a notebook in which to keep materials relating to the CCL, another symbol of its importance and its expected continuation over time.

The staff divided into small groups to discuss the school's strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of the CCL. They then voted to identify priorities on which to focus attention. Writing was the nearly unanimous choice of everyone.

After the faculty meeting, a team of staff was assembled who were interested in working on the CCL through writing. Technical and academic sides were equally represented. "In voc-tech schools, the technical and academic are two different worlds, and that was in the backs of our minds as we thought about the steering committee. The committee was an equal mix, three from technical and three from academic. Team members included teachers from drafting, English, machine tool, plumbing, science, as well as the two assistant directors, the director, and a consultant from the central office. We hoped we could do something that would unite the staff."

The committee worked together for a week during summer 1987 "to develop goals, objectives and strategies to improve communication skills through writing." In spite of their diverse perspectives, the committee persevered and at the end of the week of work had developed a handbook entitled "Improving Communication Skills Through Writing" that describes the committee's work, lists suggested teacher objectives and activities, and provides resources on writing.

The committee members made a "united presentation" to the staff at the beginning of the 1987-88 school year. The faculty agreed to each develop two new procedures and one grading procedure related to writing in their respective classrooms schoolwide. According to one of the assistant directors, this was the first time the entire faculty had ever agreed to joint action in his more than 10 years at the school. The handbook was available to provide concrete examples of possible writing activities. "Most of the teachers are finding out that the handbook is a help to them. They feel better about the work they're doing; it's more complete. The project is more practical than theoretical and that might be the basic difference. People don't need to start from scratch on an extra job. The fact that [the committee] broke ground for them helps."

The staff was not prepared for the results of their diverse efforts. As the science teacher, who is the Ella Grasso team leader, observed in a meeting of CCL Consortium team leaders, "When everyone does something small, there can be major impact. The teachers had never seen that before. The kids feel they're getting [writing] everywhere and are taking it seriously. The teachers are getting more enthusiastic." She also

commented, "It's easier on the teacher when requirements for the students are the same everywhere."

One teacher commented that she was enjoying correcting papers more now that the students were expressing themselves: "They have a lot deeper thoughts than I thought they had." A science teacher noted that a lot of students in study hall were asking for help with editing a writing assignment for a class. The machine tool teacher observed, "We are demanding more and getting more." A science teacher noted, "The kids are not balking." English teachers said that they no longer felt as though they were the only ones working on communication skills.

The assistant directors monitored the implementation of writing activities through classroom observation and other forms of regular supervision. In addition, the committee and other teachers were sources of assistance to one another. The various technical and academic departments shared lists of common terms to make essay and other writing easier. "Everyone was informed, everyone had input", a committee member said. "It was a group decision to choose the subject and everyone is cooperating, right from the teachers who were most reluctant in the beginning down to the students. It's a generally accepted program in the school. Everyone understands it. Everyone supports it."

The committee planned a series of three workshops in January, March and May, bringing in outside experts to address the topic of writing in technical subjects. They also planned internal staff workshops for the alternate months. They knew the initial implementation would raise a lot of questions for the staff.

The plumbing teacher articulated the views of many staff just after Christmas: "We've set out to start something. We haven't gotten there yet. I don't expect all of a sudden that things will change greatly. Have I noticed any great successes? It's too early! Give me some ideas. See if I'm shaking the right tree." The director: "They're ready for the 'why' of writing." The series of workshops, taken together, helped the faculty move toward writing as a creative process, getting beyond the mechanics.

As the 1987-88 school year draws to a close, the students have all felt the impact of the CCL through the emphasis on writing. Examples abound:

- Essay questions have been added to tests.
- In plumbing, students are asked to write out questions and answer them in complete sentences, along with spending more time on learning to read and write trade words correctly.
- In drafting, students' note taking receives more attention during theory lecture.
- Science students are asked to be more consistent in use of notebooks and using word problems.
- Students develop essays in the blueprint class.
- Writing assignments are given in physical education, for example, about a particular game ("You see their preconceived ideas").

- English students write scripts for oral talks.
- Every senior writes a resume and a letter of introduction to a business.
- In mathematics, students prepare and answer word problems.

What happens next? Such a question has a number of answers. The director has the funds to have the committee meet again this summer. "They will review what we've done and decide what to take on next. The group will have some old members and some new members."

The director: "I'd like the staff to get something out of it. The continuing education units that the state is requiring to continue their certification is one way. I can't think of anything better that we've done as a school. The staff, the time, I just think it's a natural!"

The active concern and support from the state department of education during 1987-88 has been acknowledged and appreciated. The director commented, "There seems to be a commitment from the state." The director concluded, "We have to keep a high profile with the CCL statewide. Print more and more of these books [the Core document] and keep on passing them out every year. We have to start talking about programs that are being carried out and programs that are working -- programs that aren't working and why."

Bridgeport

Bridgeport, which is the largest city in Connecticut, also has a very large inner-city school system. In District 3, CCL's effort as a districtwide initiative focused on critical and creative thinking skills. A cross-level, cross-subject, cross-function task force guides the effort. The 20 task force members include teachers from different grade levels and subject areas, principals, curriculum consultants, instructional coaches, district curriculum supervisors, the director of professional development and three assistant superintendents.

The director of professional development explained the district's use of the Core: "The CCL can be regarded as a prism. The entering white light is everything that will help kids to learn. The CCL helps to break that white light into bands of different colors/areas of inquiry. One band of color could represent the area of critical thinking. When we pulled the task force together, the members felt that most of the areas in the Core were already being addressed to varying degrees. The area that wasn't being addressed as fully as needed and in a unified district approach was the area of thinking skills. Our process represents a sequential narrowing of focus. We divided the thinking process into its component parts, and the component parts into their parts to facilitate their study."

Operationalizing the CCL's focus on all students, the task force developed a number of initiatives including a collaborative learning-Great Books pilot program in half of the city's remedial reading classes in grades 3 through 8. The experiment has been so successful that the task force plans to expand the initiative to include all the elementary

schools in 1988-89. Teachers who have implemented the program this year will serve as district trainers for the teachers who will begin the program next year.

According to the director of professional development, "Collaborative learning experiences provide perfect vehicles for the delivery of thinking skills instruction, and the Great Books program has proven suitable for our purposes. We're relying heavily upon our Common Core Thinking Task Force to be the messengers, the conduits from the team itself into the classrooms. They are serving as district leaders in terms of fostering positive instructional change. We're asking the curriculum supervisors to look at the wording of the Common Core in the thinking skills area. As they develop curriculum, as they identify training needs, as they interface with principals, as they look at student assessment, we want them to use it as a guide -- a matrix for shaping their thinking and their actions."

Among the other initiatives that are being piloted and closely monitored are:

- The Strategic Reasoning Program in English classes
- A Critical Reading Program at the secondary level
- Training programs on the process approach to writing and select implementation of the Network Writing Program, The Connecticut Writing Project, and the Good Writing Program
- The Stech-Vaughn Thinking Skills model in science
- Training sessions on Effective Questioning Techniques based on Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Thinking Levels
- The Barry Beyer Thinking Skills model in social studies
- Training sessions on estimation, logic, math manipulatives and problem-solving strategies for mathematics teachers
- Visual arts instructional units based on the Getty Model of Discipline Based Art Education
- Discussion sessions on theme, purpose, and creative visualization in the Performing Arts Department
- Development of a 124-term thinking skills glossary to facilitate the development of a common thinking-skills language

"We want to ensure that a student encounters a similar structure for thinking and problem-solving in every class; a unified learning paradigm," says the professional development director. An example of this would be a youngster walking into math, science, literature and social studies classes and encountering the conscious use of a thinking process to address different issues in a similar manner, be it a word problem, the dilemma of a character in a Shakespearean tragedy, or the question of how the world might be different if President Kennedy had not been assassinated.

There have been several levels of increased articulation and integration as a result of the task force's work. One has to do with the concept of implementing a specific initiative in many different contexts with a common purpose and language. Another has to do with examining progress made through individual initiatives and how they fit together. "We devote our task force meetings to reflection -- we review progress and reflect on our individual findings as we engage in the strategic planning process. We are establishing procedures that will ensure that our district's thinking-skills efforts reflect a unified, holistic approach." In the task force meetings and in the teaching of students, "the goal is to take the fractured pieces and put them back together.

"The system is continually in flux, with the pieces always moving and shifting. Only if we act strategically can we move what we want where we want it and help clarify an extremely complex process for our students. The job of the task force is to effect change at the student level. That's the bottom line."

"This is why we purposefully selected what we believe to be the most difficult area of all. An effective thinker can tackle any challenge. However, this charge is the most challenging task ever presented to an educator. The emphasis should not be on the individual initiatives piloted in our district, but rather on the philosophical foundation for our work, driven by the CCL."

Glastonbury

Glastonbury, an affluent suburb to the east of Hartford, offers what would appear to be an excellent school system, but community members are not complacent. Glastonbury was involved in the Common Core of Learning initiative from its inception: not only was a teacher at Glastonbury High School a member of the CCL Committee, but the committee visited Glastonbury High twice, early in the process of developing the Core to discuss the general concept and later to discuss a draft of Connecticut's Common Core of Learning.

A team from Glastonbury High came to the initial CCL Consortium meeting, and a decision was made to use the Core for the elementary renewal effort that was just getting underway. The renewal project was a response to the growing concerns of teachers, parents, and administrators that the elementary curriculum was vastly overcrowded, resulting in multiple bits and pieces that pleased no one. An assistant superintendent commented, "We're an academically oriented school system but we want to meet the needs of all our individual kids. Out of our grade level meetings, out of our meetings with the principals, out of our meetings with parents came this common cry, and that is why, as we began to look at the issue, the superintendent said, 'We have to approach this in a unique way.'"

As the district reported in an October 1987 news release on the topic: "Discussions on the topic of curriculum 'overload' at the elementary level were conducted in several quarters. Some of the elementary building and grade-level workshop sessions were used for this purpose; it was an agenda item at principals' and directors' meetings, and the central administration conducted discussions with consultants from the state board of education and the University of Connecticut. Several board of education meetings or workshops were used to address some of the issues within the topic. In each of these

discussions, several recurring concerns were identified. Last June, shortly after the close of school, these activities culminated in a 'Discussion Day' in which all elementary staff, parents and board of education members were invited to participate. At that workshop, small groups were formed to address the recurring issues and each group reported their findings at a general session of all participants." Secondary staff served as facilitators for the groups, the first time there had ever been significant cross-level communication.

The Elementary Curriculum and Organization Renewal Project, "a long-term, comprehensive undertaking which could lead to significant restructuring of the elementary program," was the result of analysis of data from those discussions. The plan calls for four coordinating committees in the areas of curriculum/instruction, structure and organization of the schools, communication and staff development. These groups will make recommendations to a Central Advisory Committee, which, in turn, will report to the superintendent of schools.

An assistant superintendent noted, "We recognize the need to integrate writing into all of the other disciplines. The director of language arts here really subscribes to that, but when you try to nail down people who are promoting the approach, it is difficult to get specific. We've developed an extremely strong writing program which is doing a lot of integrating across curriculum, not as much as we'd like, but the director is saying he's not ready to give up the strength of our program. We recognize it as being a vertical program, but we're not willing to give it up for something called 'Writing Across the Curriculum' which nobody can define."

An independent consultant helped the central office administrators put together a participatory plan, provided training for group leaders, and acted as a facilitator during some meetings. As she put it, "Participation doesn't mean that all people have to be at all meetings at all times. Don't ask teachers to work outside the classroom on organizational stuff without clear goals -- prevent burnout."

The assistant superintendent thinks there may be outcomes in four domains: "a better process for determining what will be taught, for setting priorities and weeding out; movement toward interdisciplinary teaching, for example, teaching reading through content areas; a request for new models for providing special services such as special education and remedial education as an alternative to pull-outs; and increased awareness of what schools are expected to do, with individual perceptions coming together."

"Democracy takes time and effort," says the assistant superintendent. "Sometimes I would like to be a benign dictator, because what it would take me 15 minutes to do, it takes two hours to communicate. We have so many irons in the fire. We probably have 60 to 70 teachers active on committees; we have linked the elementary renewal committees to ongoing committees through liaisons. There are several of us here, but it takes a lot to keep it all going."

Another administrator observed, "You may have all the elements, but if you haven't got someone pulling it together and running the whole show, then they never come together. That's starting with the board, too. If you don't pull them in, then you're fighting them all the time. I think the state department can really serve the same role [statewide],

maintaining that kind of total picture, intellectual picture, visionary picture, or whatever you want to call it. Even though it's hard, they can help school systems do it."

Glastonbury anticipates that the elementary renewal effort will eventually spread to the junior high and high school until the entire K-12 curriculum is affected.

Regional Education Service Centers

The regional education service centers (RESCs) are working with the CCL in two ways: assisting member districts in their operationalization and implementation of Core-related activities; and using the CCL to examine their own operations. For example, one RESC has completed a study of its curriculum for special education students. The team working on it found that only the foreign language section of the Core document was something that they could not figure out how to address.

Higher Education

Viewed as one of two main receivers of high school graduates along with business, higher education had significant representation on the CCL Committee. By and large, the reaction of higher education regarding the Core was positive. For example, when asked to review a draft of the Core document, the president of the University of Hartford wrote, "It is worth noting that the proposed Common Core of Learning is on target when it comes to the traditional expectations our faculty have of high school graduates, and it is our opinion that the process of baccalaureate education would be strengthened considerably by its full implementation."

While the deans' group and others reviewed drafts of Connecticut's Common Core of Learning, higher education institutions have not yet begun to address the implications of the Core for its teacher preparation and undergraduate programs. However, the developers of the alternative certification program examined the Core document as they designed training for individuals entering teaching from other occupations. In addition, some universities are working directly with schools, helping to evaluate curriculum, working to help structure curriculum to address aspects of the Core.

The state department of higher education is conducting its biennial update of its strategic plan. Just as in 1986, the plan had included helping to develop the CCL, the revised plan will include ways to promote use of the CCL by institutions of higher education. Among the possible areas of use are institutional assessment, looking at undergraduate programs, student assessment (particularly for the placement of incoming freshmen) and teacher preparation programs. The updated strategic plan was presented to the Board of Governors for Higher Education at the end of 1988.

State Department of Education

The state department of education has been involved in a variety of efforts aimed at fostering and deepening use of the CCL inside the department as well as in districts and regional service centers. In this regard, the department is unlike its counterparts in many other states, where internal implementation of a policy is not really thought about,

let alone attempted. During the development of the Core, the cabinet, which includes the top staff across divisions, discussed the implications of the Core for the department and took steps to encourage its use right from the start. For example, the department personnel that served as staff to the Common Core of Learning Committee were deliberately drawn from different areas of the department, including testing and assessment.

Among the issues the Connecticut Department of Education is addressing is the type of personnel needed, given the nature of the CCL. For example, the attitudes and attributes section of the document is raising the question of expertise in self-concept and other social-psychological issues.

Partly because there is no pot of funds earmarked specifically for Core-related activities, and partly because of the knowledge that integration and consolidation are goals that cannot be pursued through myriad streams of unconnected efforts, the department is working to make its own operations more integrated. For example, in the competitive grants process, districts can now submit one application that proposes integrated use of monies from different sources within the Division of Curriculum and Professional Development. Additional points are given to those proposals that address implementation of the Common Core of Learning.

Other challenges include how to provide assistance not only to the many districts and schools that are actively seeking to operationalize the Core, but also to the many more that have only just heard the label and want additional information. The department has approached these needs in a variety of ways. A publication is being prepared for use by educators, local board members, and citizen's groups that will highlight selected goals of local boards of education. Entitled "Models of Excellence: Local Educational Goal Statements," it will feature two districts that have incorporated the Common Core of Learning into their goals and objectives for students.

Another major effort concerns the revision of the highly regarded series of curriculum guides prepared by the department. Referred to as "guides to developing curriculum guides," the new versions will present a Core-based approach to curriculum development, emphasizing integration.

To increase awareness of the Core, the department worked with RESCUE, one of the regional service centers, to sponsor a statewide conference on the Common Core of Learning. A series of speakers, both department officials and nationally known educators, evoked the spirit and vision of the Core while attempting to provide some ways of making that vision come alive in the everyday reality of schools. Several hundred Connecticut educators and community members attended the one-day event, which also featured Core-related workshops on such topics as the arts. For more in-depth study, a range of Teaching and Learning Institutes during the summer of 1988 focused on how to operationalize the Core as part of the offerings on different curricular or instructional subjects.

The department continues to give support to the consortium member districts. Individual staff in the department, including division directors, are providing direct assistance to districts and schools, seeing first-hand the challenges and opportunities schools encounter as they engage with the Core.

Perhaps the most ambitious initiative of all is the department's work in student assessment. Department staff have reviewed all the state test instruments currently used and identified the parts of the CCL that are not currently assessed in any way. Through a collaborative development process with districts and outside consultants, the department is developing innovative approaches -- including student performance rather than pencil-and-paper modes -- to ascertain whether students are moving toward the outcomes the Common Core of Learning describes.

Thus far, the department has addressed the Core as it relates to the curriculum and assessment of students. Another prime area for focus is its ambitious teacher assessment development efforts. Always, the challenge to move forward in several directions competes with the challenge to integrate and consolidate. The Connecticut State Department of Education is making a serious effort to grapple with those challenges.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

The many hurdles and outright barriers that people encounter as they move forward can drain momentum in the same way that materials conducting electricity create resistance, diminishing the electricity flow. Educators, like scientists, must search for ways to conduct energy without draining or dissipating it.

In Connecticut, these kinds of hurdles and barriers were encountered in a variety of settings as individuals sought to bring the Common Core of Learning to life in their respective settings. The CCL experience in Connecticut provides some important ideas for policy makers both in terms of directions to take and barriers to remove so that educators can do the best possible job of teaching and helping students learn.

1. **Take actions that raise expectations for all students and adults, bringing together the need for both excellence and equity**

Changes in education need to be driven by a focus on **learning**, instead of a primary focus on changing teaching, leadership or administrative practices. The latter activities can become ends in themselves, making it easy to lose sight of the need for promoting the best in learning.

High expectations and learning also must apply to **all** students. Changes need to be grounded in a belief that all students can and must learn more than the basic skills. There is a long way to go before **all** students have the necessary opportunities to learn the higher skills and content that will enable them to be productive citizens and workers in today's world. Only in the last few years have educators and the public alike taken seriously the problem of the large numbers of students who are physically, emotionally and mentally leaving the schools.

A major barrier is the enormous complexity of trying to provide the best of learning to all students. Targeting only some students for higher-order learning, or focusing change efforts on goals such as teaching skills and administrative practices, are ways of ignoring the complexity of schools' work.

Individuals often ignore the complex in order to take action. And in a nation such as ours with a bias for action, the complex is often disdained in favor of the simple. The problem is that the simple action is often no more than a random fragment of what needs attention. To paraphrase Oliver Wendell Holmes, we often choose the simplicity on this side of complexity rather than the simplicity on the other side of complexity.

Because it is an example of simplicity on the other side of complexity, the Core document may appear deceptively simple to some people. At the same time, plumbing the full implications of its provisions is a major challenge. One of the biggest barriers comes from not acknowledging the importance of vision and reflection. However, a major emphasis of the CCL is that people will develop a vision of schooling after thinking about the Core's expectations for students, and they will reflect on how their work addresses elements of that vision.

If one talks to individuals involved in education in Connecticut -- or many other states for that matter -- one hears over and over about the press to act on many fronts at the

same time. There is no group or level that is immune. The same message is heard in the state departments of education, among principals, teachers and superintendents, in rural as well as urban and suburban areas.

With such a press, individuals are unlikely to take the time to reflect, to refocus, to recalibrate their individual actions in reference to a shared goal. In fact, reflection is not much esteemed in a nation with a bias for action. Yet, it is critical: a coherent effort to address a complex issue is impossible if those involved never have the opportunity to stop and think about what they are doing and what they hope to achieve by it.

Effective action does not spring full-blown and coordinated from disparate individuals and organizations. Teachers are too often exhorted, indeed, required to change, yet given no time to do so. What does "time to change" mean in education? It means moving beyond the notion that teachers are only working when they are in front of the students to acknowledging the shared responsibility for designing and operating the joint enterprise that is the school. Roles such as "substitute" teachers must give way to staffing plans and student groupings that allow all the adults some intentional freedom of movement during the work day. Accepting the complexity helps lead to broader acceptance that the changes will take lots of time, careful thought, and discussion.

2. Stimulate momentum toward achieving desired student outcomes

It is essential to learn how to capture the existing momentum among people and direct it toward a clearer focus on student outcomes. A barrier here is often lack of awareness of an effort and how it might dovetail with one's own work.

The Common Core of Learning has probably received more publicity on a continuing basis than any other statewide education initiative in Connecticut. Some 1,500 copies of the final draft were circulated for comment by the committee. Copies of the final document have been distributed in a variety of ways, including the commissioner carrying them with him everywhere he goes. The state department newsletter devoted its spring 1988 issue to the Core, distributing 20,000 copies. A spring 1988 statewide conference on the Core attracted many individuals who had not previously seen it. There remain, however, vast numbers of educators who are either unaware of the Core, or are unsure of its implications for them.

Schools, districts and the other organizations working with the CCL Consortium had to deal with increasing awareness. Some began with attempts to build awareness externally as well as internally in the organization, others dealt with the entire organization, others with a cross-section and still others with only a relatively small group. In every case, there was the challenge of spreading the word while also trying to deepen understanding and take action.

Lack of awareness of other vital knowledge has also been a barrier. Some organizations tried to go about change without understanding that individuals need to learn how to collaborate, that there is a body of knowledge and behaviors associated with the change process and so on. Similarly, until the advent of the Core, many people had not seriously considered the attitudes and attributes associated with successful learning and performance. Even though these have been identified as important, the knowledge and

practice base for them have not been widely developed at either the state or local level. For example, there are no psychologists or sociologists on the state department staff to provide the bridge to knowledge in these other fields.

Ongoing professional development at all levels of the system, as exemplified in Connecticut, is one way to work on this barrier. Use of consultants and shifts in hiring practices to obtain people with the necessary knowledge and abilities are others. Perhaps the most productive long-term way to address this lack of awareness is to find ways to promote the exercise of curiosity. Take steps to build a school climate that values adult learning as an important part of the work of schooling. Teachers and principals can become more assertive of their needs for continuing professional growth when a climate that supports learning, seeking and questioning is in place.

3. Encourage coherence throughout the education system.

Busyness and bits and pieces dominate much of the education world today. Amidst the disparate pieces, people lose touch with the meaning of what they are doing. The environment for moving forward must encourage coherence. This can be done through building teams where perspectives and tasks are shared. It can be done through continual renewal of the vision of student learning, through questioning the way things have always been, through discussion and reflection, through integrating rather than adding to the lists of things to do.

There has been a tremendous amount of educational improvement activity in Connecticut at all levels in recent years. Most education organizations are already involved in several efforts that require significant time and effort. Individuals in all parts of the system feel overcommitted and very reluctant to fit in yet another innovation; they are overwhelmed by the sheer number of individual activities facing them.

Even though the Common Core of Learning expressly enjoins organizations not to merely add on to implement its provisions, some have done just that, thereby multiplying the number of activities in the school day. The result: the bits grow smaller and more numerous until meaningful activity becomes impossible.

Glastonbury, in its elementary renewal, has finally called a halt to the proliferation of curriculum and activity, spurred on by teachers and parents complaining about the "overcrowded curriculum" and its effects on students. As one speaker at the Common Core conference said: "less is more."

Several other versions of adding on rather than reconfiguring are evident in Connecticut. One version is related to funding. Many schools tend to add on rather than integrate when initiatives come from the outside and have funding attached. The tendency is to keep the activity separate rather than use the funds to get started and then focus on reallocation of existing resources to incorporate the activity into the mainstream of the school's functioning. This happens for a whole litany of reasons ranging from formal requirements for keeping funds separate to turf issues and unquestioned tradition.

Another barrier that tends to work against coherence is when people bank on stability in a changing environment. In moving forward, people often act as though nothing will

ever change and yet the opposite is the reality: people themselves change constantly. In fact, research has demonstrated that a successful improvement effort breeds its own instability: key players are promoted or move on to other opportunities, thereby potentially derailing the effort.

For example, in one school in the consortium, the leader has been promoted to a newly created supervisory position. Will the CCL, which began as a somewhat separate activity and became integrated, work under new leadership? Will the new leader be committed to the effort and/or understand the strategy that the previous leader had for making it a regular part of the school's operation?

On the other hand, at the state level, "We had a major change in leadership [when the lead staff person left], which generally means a major change in direction. This program continued through the change in leadership. That's where I see the difference." As a committee member observed, "A great many of us had to deal with very short-term, high visibility, faddish projects and were put off by that: 'What's big in education this week . . .' I don't think [the CCL] is viewed that way. This is viewed as an ongoing project, mainly because we had some high powered people come down to speak to us about it, and they also backed it up with some money."

The challenge of providing continuity in change is reflected in the need to simultaneously educate students even as we are changing the very education delivery system and its content. The significant curricular/instructional changes required by the Common Core are potentially disruptive of current educational processes that are working well for students, many of whom badly need their education programs to continue working well. How to transform without being disjunctive is a major challenge.

Achieving coherence in the learning of students is no easy task. It requires carefully crafted opportunities for people throughout the education system to analyze their actions and determine how their actions influence student learning. Working toward coherence is the part that often is neglected in the rush to act, to pursue the items on lists of things to do. One consequence of neglecting this aspect of joint work is that individuals may lose the overall meaning of what they are about or never develop it in the first place.

4. Promote shared responsibility for learning and performance by students and adults alike

Many of today's reforms have subtly undermined responsibility, by setting up systems of one person checking up on another. Perhaps one of the most important issues surrounding the Common Core work relates to a movement to share responsibility -- a situation where each person and group is taking responsibility for student learning. This is very different from the current reactive mode that focuses on one person holding another responsible for an often uncertain action. In one school a major barrier arose from trying to distinguish "what the state wants" from "what the community wants" from "what the school wants" rather than finding the intersect of purpose. Individuals and organizations that have not articulated their own direction with an understanding of shared responsibility are vulnerable to being shoved around by any wind that blows.

Acknowledging insufficient student performance becomes very difficult in an environment focused on accountability rather than shared responsibility. The testing

results depress morale of teachers and principals who feel others are blaming them for the situation. In a situation of shared responsibility, all parties from the school to the state to the community are working on the solution; there is no one standing around tapping a foot impatiently.

Where them-versus-us accountability games dominate, there is an ever present network of conflicts among factions and interests within the establishment, making it difficult to put in place a statewide system of quality control for the implementation of the new policy let alone the assessment of outcomes. Attention is diverted to transferring blame rather than dealing with the actual problem.

NEXT STEPS

The experience with the Common Core of Learning in Connecticut is more than just an interesting way of doing business -- it illustrates some concrete actions that can be taken to better the odds for success in educational change endeavors.

Building on the work of others: During the actual development of the Common Core of Learning, the committee built coherence into the policy itself by thorough review of documents prepared by other groups, intensive debate among committee members and asking questions of people at district and school levels that addressed matters of implementation. Common Core of Learning Consortium teams met together periodically to share perspectives on what was working and on how to improve their approaches to increased student learning. This sharing of information helped the teams to concentrate on the whole school experience rather than one segment of it, such as the curriculum.

Developing shared perspectives across role groups: The state department of education convened the consortium team leaders -- representatives from schools, districts, regional groups, professional associations and higher education -- to take stock, share progress and think about what was needed for the future. It was, in the words of one state department staffer, the first time a cross-role group had assembled to discuss such an implementation. In the past, the group would have been all superintendents, all teachers or another role-alike group.

In the individual districts and schools, various groups also met to discuss and debate, analyze and compare, integrate and synthesize -- and to take action. In some cases, cross-subject groups of teachers met. In others, cross-role task forces worked out joint activities for the school. In still others, whole faculties gathered to refocus their activities, school-community groups met to develop a common understanding of the goals for students, and elementary and secondary teachers communicated for the first time about educational issues.

Using assessment: One of the most powerful tools a state has for encouraging coherence is the assessment strategy used to determine progress in student learning. From the very early discussions of the Core, Connecticut state leaders insisted that outcomes would be assessed. However, their strategy of doing so was carefully developed to encourage districts and schools to think through what they believed was the appropriate way to design their educational program to achieve the full range of student outcomes. The state continued to use its mastery testing program to ensure a focus on basic skills while at the same time it set in motion the development of performance assessment measures that determine whether students are simply acquiring piecemeal skills or if they are able to apply and integrate the skills and knowledge they are gaining. The department is making it known throughout the state that such testing is under development, thus encouraging educators to focus on students' ability to perform meaningful tasks rather than only on separate skills and knowledge.

Connecticut already has a track record in student performance assessment through its Connecticut Assessment of Educational Progress (CAEP), which examined student performance on a sampling basis in the areas of foreign languages, small

engine repair, drafting, carpentry, science and other subjects. It has proven to be a useful stimulant of pedagogical and content discussion among the educators who serve as test administrators and scorers. Even more significantly, the CAEP test designers have insisted on more than an expert judgment of performances, but on the explication of criteria for judgment so students and teachers would understand the expectations.

Moving forward on multiple fronts: A major goal of the state department of education was to have districts and schools consider the Common Core as they rewrote their district goals and objectives -- an undertaking on a five-year cycle. Coherence in the system is also being achieved by attempting to have the Common Core used by teacher preparation institutions and adult educators as well as the regular K-12 system. Also built into the Common Core policy was the requirement that the commissioner of education would convene a statewide committee to receive a three-year summary report on implementation and review the Core for possible revision.

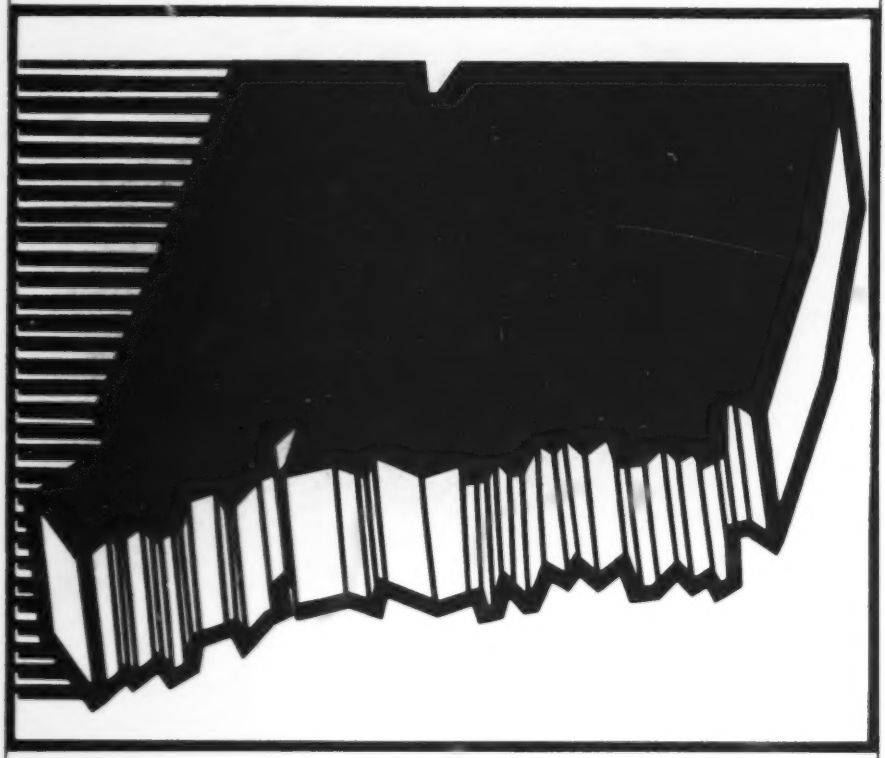
A year and a half after the development of the Core, it remains to be seen whether the consortium members will be able to maintain their coherent focus on better learning for all students. Certainly the continuation of cross-role dialogues and networks should be a key aspect of any plans for the future, and development of new relationships across groups is a desirable goal.

Among the next steps might be development of a mechanism or process to evaluate the extent to which individuals and groups in the education system are, in fact, using the Core to guide their planning and decision making. Appendix B presents some questions that educators throughout the system might use to gather and analyze information about their activities. The answers to these kinds of questions may provide a different perspective for staff members of schools, districts and other educational institutions to consider.

Challenge update

VOL. 4 NO. 3 CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION APRIL 1988

CONNECTICUT'S COMMON CORE OF LEARNING



RESOLVED that the State Board of Education adopts Connecticut's Common Core of Learning as its standard of an educated citizen and as its policy on the skills, knowledge and attitudes that are expected of Connecticut's public secondary school graduates and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

3?

Unanimously approved January 7, 1987.
Abraham Glassman, Chairman of the State Board of Education presiding

This issue of *Challenge Update* is devoted to Connecticut's Common Core of Learning, considered by many to be one of the most important developments in education in Connecticut today.

The Common Core of Learning has been called visionary for the goals it attempts to define and for the expectations it holds for our students and for our schools. It has also been called straightforward and extremely practical for its insistence that without standards, without expectations, there can be no measure of success, no accountability, no direction.

Because of the importance of the Common Core of Learning, *Challenge Update* is including the full text in this issue so that teachers, administrators and others in the education community and throughout the state may become more familiar with a document which we believe will significantly affect the education of our children in Connecticut public schools.

We are particularly pleased to publish the views of three deeply committed and articulate educators — Connecticut Teacher of the Year-1986, Deborah Gladding Willard, Glastonbury High School; Dr. E. Jean Stepherson, Principal, Bassick High School, Bridgeport; and Dr. Robert O. Minor, Superintendent of Schools, East Lyme — who were members of the committee which developed the Common Core of Learning and whose observations and insights are well worth sharing.

— F. McElaney, Editor

CONNECTICUT'S COMMON CORE OF LEARNING

Gerald N. Tirozzi, Commissioner of Education

There is a continuous need in public education to define more specifically what we expect of our students and our schools. Connecticut's Common Core of Learning does this by establishing a vision of what our young people — as a result of the K-12 experience — should know and be able to do. The Core should serve as a goal for all of us to strive toward and a standard by which to assess our progress.

The State Board of Education adopted Connecticut's Common Core of Learning as a document that defines "its standard of an educated citizen and its policy on the skills, knowledge and attitudes that are expected of Connecticut's public school graduates."

Connecticut's Common Core of Learning was designed and developed by a distinguished committee of Connecticut citizens who met from March through December 1986. The committee included business and labor leaders, elementary and secondary school educators, heads of higher education institutions, the presidents of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education and Parent/Teachers Association, Connecticut teachers and students. The group researched previous national level "core" documents, visited schools to discuss the Common Core with teachers and administrators, consulted with a number of statewide organizations, sought responses to drafts of the document, and conducted a public hearing on its content.

The thoughtful, thorough work of the committee — led by Dr. John T. Casteen III, president of the University of Connecticut, and Dr. Badi G. Foster, president of the Aetna Institute for Corporate Education — resulted in the Common Core of Learning.

The Common Core is not a state mandate to local school districts. It is a state *MODEL* that aims to influence local curriculum and instruction. We hope that school districts will use the Core to enhance school improvement efforts over the next few years in the following ways: to revise local goals and student objectives; to develop a local common core of student outcomes; to review curriculum and instruction; to develop professional development programs; to redesign assessments of student growth; and to generate school effectiveness plans. Already twenty school districts have agreed to participate in our new Common Core of Learning Consortium by using the document in a variety of ways. For example, one school district in the consortium is planning to concentrate on the Attitudes and Attributes section of the Core and plans to use it to facilitate student development of attitudes that foster continuous learning.

We want to stress, however, that the usefulness of the Core is not limited to the education community alone. Connecticut employers, for example, might well examine the Core and evaluate their existing expectations of and programs for Connecticut's high school graduates. For our vision to become a reality will require the involvement and actions of many. I sincerely encourage your participation in this important effort.

WHY A COMMON CORE?

Deborah Gladding Willard
Social Studies Teacher,
Glastonbury High School

Connecticut's Common Core of Learning, adopted by the Connecticut State Board of Education on January 7, 1987, presents a vision of what Connecticut education can and should be. From the very beginning, it was clear that there was to be just one common core, not separate ones for each educational subgroup. The Common Core establishes goals that should guide all educational pursuits while, at the same time, it maintains the flexibility that allows individual communities to determine the particular path to that end. The Common Core seeks to unite parents, students, educators, and the community at large in pursuit of a shared vision: a vision of educated independent youth, capable of thinking and acting responsibly.

And there is much to be said for pursuing common goals in a society often fragmented and factionalized by a barrage of centrifugal forces. For in further refining its goals, a community defines itself and creates its dreams. It is forced to look within, to decide what it wishes its future to be, and, in educating its youth, its legacy is launched. For

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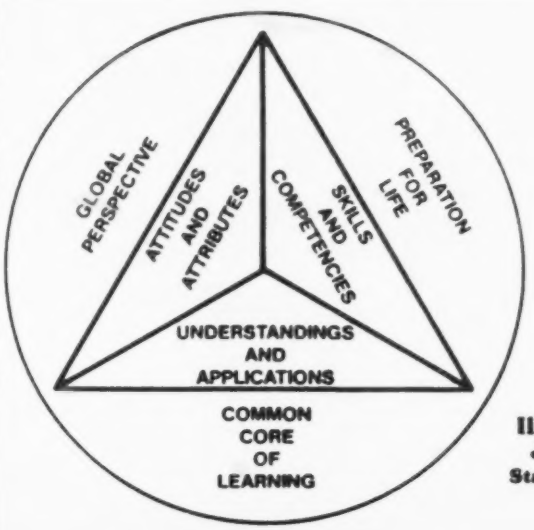

Illustration designed by Jennifer C. Goldberg, State Student Advisory Council

The Common Core of Learning:
A PRINCIPAL'S PERSPECTIVE

E. Jean Stepherson
Principal of Bassick High School, Bridgeport

In early March 1986, Commissioner Gerald N. Tirozzi established the Common Core of Learning Committee. This blue ribbon committee, representing the business community as well as educators, students and parents, was charged with preparing a "common core of learning" that represented the skills, knowledge and attitudes expected of all Connecticut high school graduates. The committee had the opportunity to review the "common cores" from many national studies, other states and local school systems.

In developing the Common Core of Learning, the committee wrestled with the questions: 1. What does a diploma from a Connecticut high school mean? 2. What knowledge and skills can be expected from a graduate of Connecticut's public schools? The committee worked for many months to formulate a consensus position which defines the skills and understandings Connecticut's public school graduates can reasonably be expected to possess.

As a high school principal, one of my major challenges is to create an environment where teachers can teach and students can learn. I have also accepted the challenge to prepare students to enter a society that is complicated and constantly changing. Many studies suggest that there are two Connecticuts, one for the advantaged and the other for the disadvantaged. As an urban educator, I feel strongly that the Common Core of Learning will bring us closer to a united Connecticut that will ensure equity for all students. It is from this perspective that I respond to Connecticut's Common Core of Learning, which establishes a vision of what Connecticut's high school graduates should know and be able to do.

Moreover, the Common Core of Learning reflects a commitment to excellence in public elementary and secondary education and to high expectations of all our students. As Commissioner Tirozzi constantly reminded members of this committee, "The Common Core of Learning does not represent functional literacy or minimal competency."

All students, and students enrolled in urban schools in particular, need an overall environment that assists them in excelling. Students learn best when excellence is expected of them and when they are encouraged to achieve. They need incentives to learn and stimulation to learning. Today's students will need to bear in mind the effect of their own attitudes on the learning process and on their school. They will need a sense of personal responsibility for their own progress. As high schools devise curricular and instructional approaches to meet these needs, we must also prepare students to enter a society that is complicated and constantly changing. Whether students continue their education after graduation from high school or go immediately to employment, they need to have a solid foundation for a productive career and fulfilling life. To maintain the health of our economy and the ability of individuals to obtain rewarding work, students need more than just the basic skills or the minimum requirements for graduation; they will need the attributes and attitudes, skill and competence, understandings and applications all encompassed in the Common Core of Learning.

Bridgeport's focus for the 1987-1988 Common Core of Learning pilot addresses the Reasoning and Problem Solving section of the Core. The Board of Education has established a study committee under the leadership of William Glass, Supervisor of Professional Development, which will focus on the following:

- compile and review the latest educational research on critical and creative thinking skills.
- develop a summary for each research team reviewed. All summaries will be included in our professional library for ongoing reference.
- develop a series of recommendations and guidelines for thinking skills instruction.
- prepare a final report to be presented to the superintendent and Board of Education in the spring of 1988. The report will indicate findings and implementation strategies relative to the areas of critical and creative thinking skills.

The Bridgeport Board of Education will pilot and monitor the following thinking skills projects:

- English 7-12 — Critical Thinking Skills, Effective Questioning Techniques, Study Skills
- Reading/Language Arts K-8 — Great Books, Collaborative Learning
- Mathematics — Reasoning and Problem Solving Strategies Training Program
- Social Studies — Critical Thinking in the Humanities
- Science — Critical Thinking and Problem Analysis
- Visual Arts — Creative Problem Solving, Effective Questioning Techniques

The results of each pilot project will be presented to the Common Core of Learning Team, which includes representatives of the Department of Instruction, elementary and secondary principals, teacher/curriculum specialists and central office staff.

School reform is very much on the mind of the nation. Over the past three or four years, studies of American schools have proliferated, and more are expected over the next year as we begin to address the ever-growing population of 'at risk'

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visions ask us whither we would go, and this ability to influence our own destiny is what distinguishes humans from all other creatures. And so the creation of a common core empowers all of us to reach for those ends, knowing that some will find the path harder than others, but recognizing that, in a democratic society rooted in the protection of individual rights and the promotion of equal opportunity, a common set of expectations is not only useful, but also right.

And there is also much to be said for the process by which the Common Core is adapted and implemented by Connecticut's school systems. The committee which prepared the Common Core was a microcosm of the community at large. It brought together educators, business people, labor representatives, parents, and lastly, the Common Core's clients: students. The committee's composition is important not only for what it shows about the importance of process in achieving a goal, but also for what it says about the committee's goal. Thus, while the adoption and incorporation of the Common Core at the local level are goals, so too is the sense of unity, of bonding as a group, that comes from creating mission statements. And this, too, is a desirable goal.

In establishing its goals, the Common Core went well beyond minimum competencies subject to objective tests and beyond requiring the addition of specific courses or credits as requirements for graduation. It also did not create one curriculum to be taught uniformly throughout Connecticut. Instead, it approached education holistically, recognizing that what was being sought were outcomes of the entire K-12 educational experience and that these outcomes included a young person's attitudes and personal characteristics as well as his/her traditional academic accomplishments. Thus, the Common Core defined an educated person as one who could perform competently not only in an academic setting, but also one who was a reflective, caring individual in the community.

Individual achievement in these areas would, most likely, produce individual rewards. But what the Common Core also points to very strongly is the fact that the individual is part of a group and that the whole entity gains strength when the powers of a member are increased. Here many of the results are qualitative rather than quantitative, though they are still observable and measurable. And for many, the academic and social maturation process will continually renew itself long after the individual has graduated from high school. Indeed, lifelong learning and personal growth are Common Core goals.

The ultimate purpose of Connecticut's Common Core of Learning was "to prepare future generations of capable and flexible people." From the outset, the Common Core aimed towards the future. The Common Core rests upon a set of philosophical assumptions critical to understanding the final document. The committee strongly believed that "... there is a common set of skills, knowledge and attitudes essential to the total development of all Connecticut students... [that] these learnings have intrinsic value [and] that these skills, knowledge and attitudes constitute a set of expectations that all students can achieve regardless of diverse learning rates and styles."

In presenting Connecticut's Common Core, the committee divided the core into three general categories: Attributes and Attitudes; Skills and Competencies; and Understandings and Applications. But, as shown in the illustration designed by Jennifer Goldberg, a member of the State Student Advisory Council and the Common Core Committee, these three sections are part of a whole, each dependent upon the other for support. The committee placed the section on attributes and attitudes first because it believed "A positive self-image and self-esteem are crucial to learning... [and that] students [must] take responsibility for their lives." Recognizing that the school is not the sole agency involved in creating attributes and attitudes such as persistence, intellectual curiosity, and moral and ethical values, the committee nevertheless felt that education could and should foster the growth of these preconditions to learning.

Next the committee presented what it believed to be the "core of basic or enabling skills and competencies that provide the critical intellectual foundations for broader acquisition of knowledge." Thus, whether one speaks of reading, writing, listening, reasoning, problem-solving or quantitative or general learning skills, it is clear that these are tools which every person must possess to be productive in the twenty-first century.

Lastly, the committee dealt with Understandings and Applications. It is here that the individual's attributes and attitudes, skills and competencies are applied to what most would recognize as the traditional content of the curriculum: the academic disciplines. But here the thrust of the Common Core was not only mastery of traditional content areas but also the recognition of the interrelationship between and among the disciplines as well as their significance in an increasingly complex and interdependent world.

Thus what the Common Core aimed to do, both in setting goals and establishing a process for educational evaluation and renewal, was to successfully marry vision and task and to invite and unite communities to examine themselves and to project their dreams.

Beginning with this issue, *Challenge Update* has been expanded from 8 to 12 pages of text in order to cover more fully and in greater depth the educational issues of today.

We hope that you will enjoy the expanded issues, and we welcome your comments and suggestions to improve future editions.

Editor

youngsters. The myriad studies published to date have looked at many aspects of schooling and have made numerous recommendations about how schools might be improved. These studies have reminded us that schools, urban and suburban, play a vital role in the life of the country. Schools must prepare our young people for participation in a democratic society and for a productive life in general. With responsibilities such as these, I view Connecticut's Common Core of Learning as a vehicle for meeting these demands. As an urban educator and administrator, I am concerned about educational quality expressed in ways that advance social justice. Educational quality must not lead to actions that limit the aspirations and opportunities of disadvantaged and minority youth or that would reverse the progress that has already been made. Rather, concern for educational quality must be expressed in a commitment to quality for all studies. I, therefore, view the Common Core of Learning as criteria for designing educational efforts that will enable more students to succeed in Connecticut. The Common Core of Learning is only a beginning that will change in response to new demands and challenges.

I salute Commissioner Tirozzi and the State Board of Education, which has adopted the Common Core of Learning; the Bridgeport Board of Education, which is participating in the Common Core's pilot; and the business and education community representatives who served on this committee to improve learning opportunities for all students, especially those at risk of educational failure for economical, environmental or physical factors. It was a landmark in my career to serve on this committee that worked for many months to establish a vision of what high school graduates should know and be able to do in order to achieve all that they can. From this perspective, Connecticut's Common Core of Learning ensures that all students will receive an equal educational opportunity second to none.

The Common Core of Learning: A PROGRESS REPORT ON ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S RESPONSE

Robert O. Minor, Superintendent of Schools, East Lyme

Educational leaders in the State of Connecticut are facing another challenge — the task of coordinating local curriculum learning outcomes (objectives) to the skills and competencies, understandings and applications, attitudes and attributes found in the *Connecticut Common Core of Learning*.

Many local school districts may find it difficult to make the appropriate correlations between their respective learning objectives and the Common Core objectives, due in part to a lack of an appropriate curriculum document and/or format which will lend itself to such a correlation. As a result of timing and coincidence, the East Lyme public schools happily found themselves in a favorable position to accomplish this necessary correlation in a timely fashion. It is my hope that sharing our experience may assist others as they, too, respond to the Common Core of Learning.

In 1986 our school district began a curriculum delineation project designed to capture the content of all of our school curriculum and to correlate that curriculum with other educational variables. The process was developed in a systematic, segmented and rational manner.

There was a need for each school to identify what content is being taught in order to assess the information in light of both student needs (for the 21st century) and societal demands. The product of this multi-year task will provide a tangible asset that can be used by all levels of the profession as we plan a curriculum and accompanying instructional program appropriate for the 21st century. We will, in fact, have eliminated traditional curriculum guides once the project is completed and will also have eliminated the need to completely rewrite our curriculum in the near future.

Since the process allows us to database all of the information into a spreadsheet format consisting of rows and columns, it was easy for us to insert another column with the heading Common Core of Learning into the program format. With a subheading under the Common Core for each of the Core categories (A/A = Attitudes and Attributes, S/C = Skills and Competencies, U/A = Understandings and Applications), the format allows us to correlate the Common Core objectives directly to our Intended Learning Outcomes. Once the Common Core information was placed into a databased format, the task became even more manageable. Rather than rewrite each Common Core objective in total, the individual making the correlation needs only to place a letter and number in the appropriate box under one of the three categories in line with the appropriate Intended Learning Outcome. Figure I indicates how this correlation looks using a sample of two Intended Learning Outcomes.

Figure I

List of Objectives (Intended Learning Outcome)	Common Core A/A	S/C	U/A
			E-1
		A-2	E-3
I Children will enjoy literature	D-3	A-3	E-7
II Children will develop strategies for reading expository materials	A-2	A-4 A-7	

Although East Lyme is using a databased computer program to store the curriculum data, it is unnecessary for districts to do so unless they are planning an expanded delineation. The format is easy to use

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Progress Report

continued from page 5

and to prepare. What is needed first is a listing of all the objectives taught in each course. The objectives should be listed sequentially by quarter (10-week period). If your district is anything like ours, many objectives already exist somewhere in the district in some format or other. If there is no listing of objectives, use the objectives usually noted in each teacher's lesson plans or, if this is lacking, give the teachers time to list them at the end of each school quarter. Do not ask for esoteric behavior objectives which can turn the staff away from the intent. Rather ask for concise intended learning outcomes and keep the format the same for all courses. If several teachers teach the same course, allow them time to meet in a group to come up with one series of outcomes for the course.

Once you have a listing of Intended Learning Outcomes for each course (we have over 300 separate courses in East Lyme, including Chinese), you are well ahead in your task. What remains is to revise the Common Core of Learning into a database outline format and distribute it to all faculty, staff and administrators.

As soon as this is done, spend an hour with your administrators in order to acclimate them to the task at hand and to give them an opportunity to become familiar with the process and the content of the Common Core of Learning. Subsequently the administrators should meet with their respective faculties to acclimate them also to the process and the Common Core content. Once this is done, give the teachers time to correlate the Common Core objectives with the Intended Learning Outcomes as shown in Figure I. You will be amazed how rapidly the task is completed. Use staff development days to enable this phase to move even more rapidly. *Note*: If you are not computerizing the product, you might want to attach a complete list of Common Core objectives to each course for easy reference.

Once the task is completed, you are ready to form assessment groups to look at the courses to ascertain whether your school program meets the standards noted in the Common Core of Learning. If you meet those standards, that's great; if not, you have to decide whether or not you modify your curriculum content to do so and then plan that phase of change.

The curriculum delineation process described above is only one facet of the total project we are undertaking. I believe the process will simplify your task in correlating Common Core of Learning objectives with your local curriculum content, and I invite you to contact us if you have any questions on this process or other phases of our project.

Clearly, everyone who contributed to the development of the Common Core of Learning should feel a sense of accomplishment. Yet by itself, this document will not affect the opportunities, experiences or achievement of a single Connecticut student. For this, we must look to you: our classroom teachers, principals, district staff, board members, parents and concerned citizens. Your leadership in bringing the Common Core of Learning to life is vital.

We hope this document will be used within your schools and communities to promote a new level of dialogue about education — about its purposes and effects.

With your leadership, the Common Core of Learning will help us all face the future with a sense of renewed confidence in what we can accomplish and a renewed determination in what we *will* accomplish.

Badi G. Foster
President, Aetna Institute for Corporate Education
Co-chair, Common Core of Learning Committee

COMMON CORE OF LEARNING COMMITTEE

- John T. Casteen III, President, The University of Connecticut
- Badi G. Foster, President, The Aetna Institute for Corporate Education
- Dallas K. Beal, President, Connecticut State University
- Joan Carter, President, T and T Inc.
- Joseph J. Cirasuolo, Superintendent, Clinton
- Fernando Comulada, Vice President for Latin American and International Division, Connecticut Bank and Trust Co.
- Joseph J. Crisco, Jr., Director of Governmental Affairs, United Technologies Corporation
- Jennifer C. Goldberg, State Student Advisory Council
- Marie S. Gustin, Superintendent, New Britain
- Lee Hay, 1983 Connecticut and National Teacher of the Year, Manchester
- Raymond Lenoue, President, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
- Julia McNamara, President, Albertus Magnus College
- Peg Perillie, President, Parent/Teacher Association of Connecticut, Inc.
- David J. Quattropani, Assistant Superintendent, Newtown
- Helen Regan, Coordinator, Secondary Teacher Certification Program, Connecticut College
- E. Jean Stepherson, Principal, Bassick High School, Bridgeport
- Betty Tianti, President, Connecticut State AFL-CIO
- Deborah Gladding Willard, 1986 Connecticut Teacher of the Year, Glastonbury
- N. Patricia Yarborough, President, Post College

Ex Officio

- Norma Foreman Glasgow, Commissioner of Higher Education
- Gerald N. Tirozzi, Commissioner

Contributing Alternate Members

- Matt Bates and Barry Williams, Connecticut State AFL-CIO
- Merle Harris, Department of Higher Education
- David Suisman, State Student Advisory Council

CONNECTICUT'S COMMON CORE OF LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

The Common Core has been developed with an understanding that students begin their schooling at different levels of readiness and some have developmental handicaps as well. It is also acknowledged that students have different interests and aspirations. Recognizing these differences, however, does not justify the development of a different Common Core for each student. To the contrary, the goal of each student developing to his or her fullest potential argues for the creation of one Common Core that has the highest expectations for each child.

Connecticut's Common Core of Learning is organized under three major headings with subheadings that reflect significant groups of skills, knowledge and attitudes:

Attributes and Attitudes
Self-Concept
Motivation and Persistence
Responsibility and Self-Reliance
Intellectual Curiosity
Interpersonal Relations
Sense of Community
Moral and Ethical Values

Skills and Competencies
Reading
Writing
Speaking, Listening and Viewing
Quantitative Skills
Reasoning and Problem Solving
Learning Skills

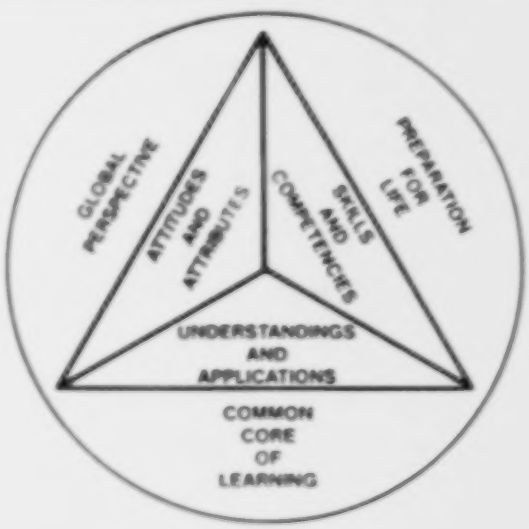
Understandings and Applications
The Arts
Careers and Vocations
Cultures and Languages
History and Social Sciences
Literature
Mathematics
Physical Development and Health
Science and Technology

The order of the three major headings does not represent their relative importance. It does represent a logical sequence of assuring effective learning. While schools share the development of attitudes and attributes with the home and other institutions, it is acknowledged that students learn best when they are appropriately motivated and self-confident. Although both products of effective instruction, these attitudes and attributes are also preconditions for mastering specific skills. Many of the skills and competencies, and the attitudes and attributes, while not taught directly or from a written curriculum, are continually developed during instruction in the traditional curriculum areas presented in the section on understandings and applications.

The Common Core of Learning should not be misconstrued as a set of isolated skills and understandings. To the contrary, it should be viewed as an integrated and interdependent set of learning outcomes. Users of the Common Core of Learning should continually look for cross-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches and for the transfer of skills and knowledge from one domain to another and one subject area to another. Many items listed under a particular subheading could easily have been included under others.

The Common Core is not a curriculum. Each school district's curriculum will be more comprehensive and significantly more specific, including a wide range of learning experiences and instructional strategies. The Common Core is a statement of the student outcomes expected to result from the entire K-12 school experience. It has been developed to influence curriculum by generating discussion and stimulating change in school programs, student objectives, resource allocations and teaching.

Finally, the Common Core of Learning has been developed neither as a state mandate nor as a condition for graduation. It provides a statement of high expectations needed for all Connecticut students to become educated citizens. It is also offered as a catalyst for school improvement. The framers of this document view it as a beginning, one that will change in response to new demands and challenges.



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THE COMMON CORE

Attributes and Attitudes

A positive self-image and self-esteem are crucial to learning. These attributes determine goals, behaviors and responses to others. Furthermore, people depend on and influence one another. Therefore, it is important that students take responsibility for their lives and set appropriate goals for themselves. In doing so, they develop lifelong attitudes.

The family and societal forces other than schools play major roles in fostering student growth, and schools can provide a supportive climate for that growth. While it is inappropriate for schools to accept the sole or even primary responsibility for developing these attributes and attitudes, it is also inappropriate to deny the critical importance of these factors as preconditions to learning, as consequences of the teaching of all disciplines, and as desired outcomes for all students.

Positive Self-Concept

As part of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- appreciate his/her worth as a unique and capable individual and exhibit self-esteem;
- develop a sense of personal effectiveness and a belief in his/her ability to shape his/her future;
- develop an understanding of his/her strengths and weaknesses and the ability to maximize strengths and rectify or compensate for weaknesses.

Motivation and Persistence

As part of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- experience the pride of accomplishment that results from hard work and persistence;
- act through a desire to succeed rather than a fear of failure, while recognizing that failure is a part of everyone's experience;
- strive toward and take the risks necessary for accomplishing tasks and fulfilling personal ambitions.

Responsibility and Self-Reliance

As part of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- assume the primary responsibility for identifying his/her needs and setting reasonable goals;
- initiate actions and assume responsibility for the consequences of those actions;
- demonstrate dependability;
- demonstrate self-control.

Intellectual Curiosity

As part of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- demonstrate a questioning attitude, open-mindedness and curiosity;
- demonstrate independence of thought necessary for leadership and creativity;
- pursue lifelong learning.

Interpersonal Relationships

As part of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- develop productive and satisfying relationships with others based upon mutual respect;
- develop a sensitivity to and an understanding of the needs, opinions, concerns and customs of others;
- participate actively in reaching group decisions;
- appreciate the roles and responsibilites of parents, children and families.

Sense of Community

As part of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- develop a sense of belonging to a group larger than friends, family and co-workers;
- develop an understanding of the importance of each individual to the improvement of the quality of life for all in the community;
- examine and assess the values, standards and traditions of the community;
- understand and appreciate his/her own historical and ethnic heritage as well as that of others represented within the larger community.

Moral and Ethical Values

As part of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- recognize the necessity for moral and ethical conduct in a society;
- recognize that values affect choices and conflicts;
- develop personal criteria for making informed moral judgments and ethical decisions.

Skills and Competencies

All educated citizens must possess a core of basic or enabling skills and competencies that provide the critical intellectual foundations for broader acquisition of knowledge. These enabling skills, applied in diverse ways, form the heart of an academic experience as each contributes to the development of understanding within and among disciplines.

Reading

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- identify and comprehend the main and subordinate ideas, details and facts in written work and summarize the ideas in his/her own words;
- identify, comprehend and infer comparisons, contrasts, sequences and conclusions in written work;
- recognize different purposes and methods of writing, identify a writer's point of view and tone, and interpret a writer's meaning inferentially as well as literally;
- set purposes, ask questions and make predictions prior to and during reading and draw conclusions from reading;
- make critical judgments about written work including separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistency and judging the validity of evidence and sufficiency of support;
- vary his/her reading speed and method based on the type of material and the purpose for reading;
- use the features of books and other reference materials, such as table of contents, preface, introduction, titles and subtitles, index, glossary, appendix and bibliography.

Writing

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- write standard English sentences with correct sentence structure, verb forms, punctuation,

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capitalization, possessives, plural forms, word choice and spelling;
- select, organize and relate ideas and develop them in coherent paragraphs;
- organize sentences and paragraphs into a variety of forms and produce writing of an appropriate length using a variety of composition types;
- use varying language, information, style and format appropriate to the purpose and the selected audience;
- conceive ideas and select and use detailed examples, illustrations, evidence and logic to develop the topic;
- gather information from primary and secondary sources; write a report using that information; quote, paraphrase and summarize accurately; and cite sources properly;
- improve his or her own writing by restructuring, correcting errors and rewriting.

Speaking, Listening and Viewing

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- engage critically and constructively in an oral exchange of ideas;
- ask and answer questions correctly and concisely;
- understand spoken instructions and give spoken instructions to others;
- distinguish relevant from irrelevant information and the intent from the details of an oral message;
- identify and comprehend the main and subordinate ideas in speeches, discussions, audio and video presentations, and report accurately what has been presented;
- comprehend verbal and nonverbal presentations at the literal, inferential and evaluative levels;
- deliver oral presentations using a coherent sequence of thought, clarity of presentation, suitable vocabulary and length, and nonverbal communication appropriate for the purpose and audience.

Quantitative Skills

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- add, subtract, multiply and divide using whole numbers, decimals, fractions and integers;
- make and use measurements in both traditional and metric units to measure lengths, areas, volumes, weights, temperatures and times;
- use ratios, proportions and percents, powers and roots;
- understand spatial relationships and the basic concepts of geometry;

This document sets forth what we believe ought to be the outcomes of education in the public schools. Many graduates do not now command all of the Common Core. We believe that all or virtually all can if we make education itself more productive.

The Common Core details what school graduates ought to know and know how to do. The language is deliberately simple. We do not believe that good education ought to be mysterious. We do believe that clear (even ambitious) goals will benefit students, parents, teachers and board members. And we believe also that the Common Core serves both of our larger goals — quality and equality — in ways that are essential to the public interest in education.

John T. Casteen III
President, University of Connecticut
Co-chair, Common Core of Learning Committee

- make estimates and approximations and judge the reasonableness of results;
- understand the basic concepts of probability and statistics;
- organize data into tables, charts and graphs and read and interpret data presented in these forms;
- formulate and solve problems in mathematical terms.

Reasoning and Problem Solving

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- recognize and use inductive and deductive reasoning, recognize fallacies and examine arguments from various points of view;
- draw reasonable conclusions from information found in various sources and defend his/her conclusions rationally;
- formulate and test predictions and hypotheses based on appropriate data;
- comprehend, develop and use concepts and generalizations;
- identify cause and effect relationships;
- identify and formulate problems;
- gather, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information pertinent to the problem;
- develop alternative solutions to problems, weigh relative risks and benefits, make logical decisions and verify results;
- use critical and creative thinking skills to respond to unanticipated situations and recurring problems.

Learning Skills

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- set learning goals and priorities consistent with stated objectives and progress made and allocate the time necessary to achieve them;
- determine what is needed to accomplish a task and establish habits conducive to learning independently or with others;
- follow a schedule that accounts for both short- and long-term project accomplishment;
- locate and use a variety of sources of information including print and non-print materials, computers and other technologies, interviews and direct observations;
- read or listen to specific information and take effective and efficient notes.

Understandings and Applications

Skills and competencies cannot be ends in themselves. Unless students have the knowledge and experi-

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ences needed to apply those learnings and develop a fuller understanding of life, their education will be incomplete. Schools must therefore accept responsibility for leading students through a body of knowledge and its application. This is what comprises the major content of the curriculum.

These understandings and applications have been grouped here under the usual disciplines, but it is important to recognize the interrelationship among the disciplines and to promote students' ability to transfer knowledge and applications across subject areas.

The Arts: Creative and Performing

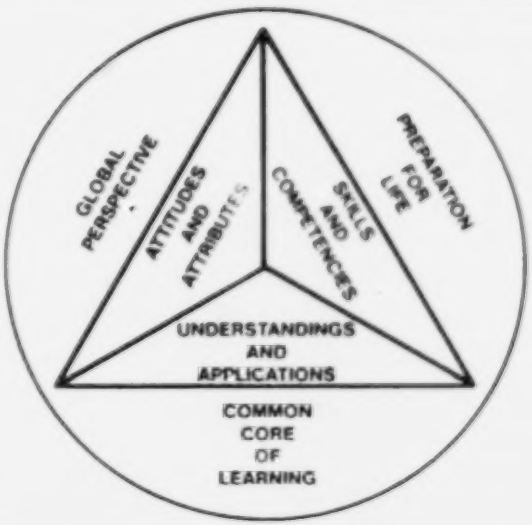
As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- express his/her own concepts, ideas and emotions through one or more of the arts (art, music, drama and dance);
- appreciate the importance of the arts in expressing and illuminating human experiences;
- understand that personal beliefs and societal values influence art forms and styles;
- identify the materials, processes and tools used in the production, exhibition and public performance of works of art, music, drama and dance;
- use and understand language appropriate to each art form when discussing, critiquing and interpreting works in the visual and performing arts;
- identify significant works and recognize the aesthetic qualities of art, music, drama and dance from different historical periods and cultures.

Careers and Vocations

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- demonstrate positive attitudes toward work, including acceptance of the necessity of making a living and an appreciation of the social value and dignity of work;
- demonstrate attitudes and habits (such as pride in good workmanship, dependability and regular attendance) and the employability skills and specialized knowledge that will make the individual a productive participant in economic life and a contributor to society;
- consider the range of occupations that will be personally satisfying and suitable to his/her skills, interests and aptitudes;
- identify, continue or pursue the education and training necessary for his/her chosen career/vocation;
- understand personal economics and its relationship to skills required for employment, promotion and financial independence;;
- exhibit the interpersonal skills necessary for success in the workplace (such as working harmoniously as part of a team and giving and taking direction).



Cultures and Languages

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- recognize characteristics common to all people, such as physical attributes, emotional responses, attitudes, abilities and aspirations;
- respect differences among people and recognize the pluralistic nature of United States society;
- demonstrate an understanding of other cultures and their roles in international affairs;
- analyze the structure of spoken and written language;
- recognize the commonalities and the differences that exist in the structure of languages;
- understand and communicate in at least one language in addition to English.

History and Social Sciences

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- recognize and analyze events, personalities, trends and beliefs that have shaped the history and culture of Connecticut, the United States and the world;
- demonstrate a knowledge of United States history and government and understand the duties, responsibilities and rights of United States citizenship;
- understand the basic concepts of economics;
- analyze and compare the political and economic beliefs and systems of the United States with those of other nations;
- apply major concepts drawn from the disciplines of history and the social sciences — anthropology, economics, geography, law and government, philosophy, political science, psychology and sociology — to hypothetical and real situations;
- demonstrate basic knowledge of world geography;
- apply critical thinking skills and knowledge from history and the social sciences to the decision-making process and the analysis of

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controversial issues in order to understand the present and anticipate the future;
- understand the roles played by various racial, ethnic and religious groups in developing the nation's pluralistic society;
- appreciate the mutual dependence of all people in the world and understand that our lives are part of a global community joined by economic, social, cultural and civic concerns.

Literature

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- understand that literature reflects and illuminates human experiences, motives, conflicts and values;
- understand the essential elements of poetry, drama, fiction and non-fiction;
- understand and appreciate selected literary masterpieces, both past and present, that manifest different value systems and philosophies;
- recognize symbolism, allegory and myth;
- identify literary themes and their implications;
- evaluate selected literary works and support each evaluation;
- enjoy reading as a lifelong pursuit.

Mathematics

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- understand that mathematics is a means of expressing quantifiable ideas;
- apply mathematical knowledge and skills to solve a broad array of quantitative, spatial and analytical problems;
- use mathematical skills and techniques to complete consumer and job-related tasks;
- select and use appropriate approaches and tools for solving problems, including mental computation, trial and error, paper and pencil, calculator and computer;
- use mathematical operations in describing and analyzing physical and social phenomena;
- demonstrate a quantitative sense by using numbers for counting, measuring, comparing, ordering, scaling, locating and coding;
- apply basic algebraic and geometric concepts to representing, analyzing and solving problems;
- use basic statistical concepts to draw conclusions from data.

Physical Development and Health

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- understand human growth and development, the functions of the body, human sexuality and the lifelong value of physical fitness;
- plan and implement a physical fitness program with a variety of conditioning exercises and/or leisure activities;
- understand the basic scientific principles which apply to human movement and physical activities;
- understand the role physical activities play in psychological and social development;
- understand and apply the basic elements of proper nutrition, avoidance of substance abuse, prevention and treatment of illness, and management of emotional stress;
- recognize the need for a safe and healthy environment, practice proper safety skills, and demonstrate a variety of basic life-saving skills.

Science and Technology

As a result of education in grades K-12, each student should be able to:

- understand and apply the basic principles, concepts and language of biology, chemistry, physics, earth and space science;
- understand the implications of limited natural resources, the study of ecology and the need for conservation;
- identify and design techniques for recognizing and solving problems in science, including the development of hypotheses and the design of experiments to test them — the gathering of data, presenting them in appropriate formats, and drawing inferences based upon the results;
- use observation and analysis of similarities and differences in the study of natural phenomena;
- demonstrate the ability to work with laboratory measuring, manipulating and sensing devices;
- understand the implications of existing and emerging technologies on our society and our quality of life, including personal, academic and work environments;
- recognize the potential and the limitations of science and technology in solving societal problems.

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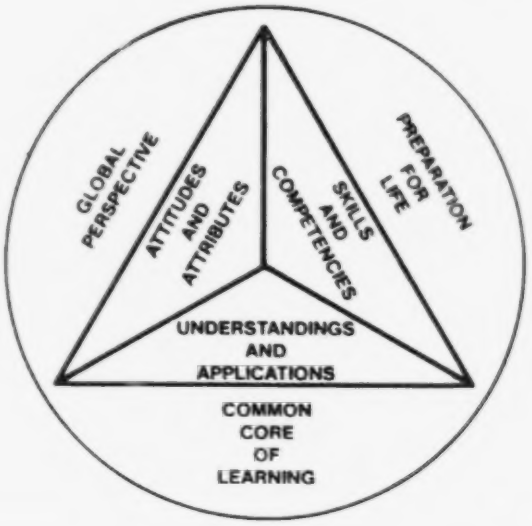

challenge update

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APPENDIX B

This appendix provides examples of questions to ask when conducting a study to determine if a state's education system is focused on the best of learning for all students.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOCUSED ON LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE

What is the level of efforts to articulate high outcomes for all students?

Do individuals and organizations seem to be truly focused on high outcomes for all students or are they just going through the motions?

Are the outcomes being refined and made more fitting for specific situations? Are more and more people grasping the meaning of the outcomes and their importance?

Are outcome measures being used that encourage the best teaching practices among teachers and the best learning approaches among students?

Are outcome measures being used that neither trivialize certain outcomes nor overemphasize others?

Are outcome measures used that help students and teachers understand the criteria of excellence and sufficiency?

Are adults in the system continual learners and do they act in ways that model the behaviors desired of students? Do they recognize the significance of modeling?

ENCOURAGING COHERENCE

Are we attending to unanticipated consequences?

How are structure and other barriers being removed to enhance implementation of changes to focus on student outcomes?

What has changed for students as a result of the implementation? How can we tell if they manifest the desired outcomes?

To what extent are new efforts being integrated into organizations versus being treated as special projects?

Are parts that have previously been unconnected being integrated into a whole?

Is a common language in use by those involved in education developing?

Is awareness of and commitment to the vision expanding?

Are we blending effectively the multiple perspectives into a shared vision?

Does there seem to be a core of well-regarded and capable people who are continuing to refine the best ideas needed in the system?

Do more and more people seem to be developing an awareness of the higher learning for all students and becoming increasingly committed to it?

Are symbols and ways of talking about the schools being changed to coincide better with the desired vision?

STIMULATING MOMENTUM

How have participating organizations operationalized the outcomes and taken action to enhance learning opportunities for all students? On which aspects have they focused?

What is the level of attention to the full set of student outcomes? Are the outcomes being embodied in the full student experience or only in the curriculum?

What roles are central office personnel, building administrators and teachers playing in this effort?

Do the actions being taken involve the total organization or a part of it? Is there a plan for increasing involvement to the total organization?

Is the energy of people still high enough to keep going?

Do energizers -- e.g., harnessing self-interests, compacting tasks, fostering coherence, having a sense of accomplishment -- seem to be working throughout the system to keep the effort moving forward? Does the energy seem sufficient to meet the next round of challenges?

Is action being taken based on desired outcomes for students?

Are people throughout the effort learning to think better?

Are organizations planning for long-term change as well as pursuing short-term objectives?

Are participating organizations acting out of a sense of compliance or have they harnessed the statewide focus to their own goals?

What change strategies are participating organizations using to operationalize the CCL?

How are participating organizations keeping attention focused on the effort? What incentives have been built in?

PROMOTING SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR QUALITY

Do we know if what we are doing is working? How do we know? How can we tell others?

What types of assistance do participating organizations need in order to move forward?

How are rewards and incentives being used to encourage shared responsibility? Are accountability systems encouraging responsibility at all levels?

Is the leadership and management of the enterprise encouraging shared responsibility, coherence and long-term change?

How have relationship among various groups and individuals shifted as a result of attention to student outcomes?

What types of leadership and management are in place to move the vision forward?

To what extent are role groups and organizations that have not previously worked together forging links?

What structures and mechanisms have the various participating organizations used to increase the focus on student learning?

What has been the membership composition of teams and committees?

What proportion of a participating organization's staff has been involved in activities that refocus the organization on higher learning for all students?

How have organizations balanced the desire to get as many people involved as possible with the need for action?

What have been the benefits and costs of collaboration in different types of organizations?

What skills have individuals and organizations had to acquire in order to successfully engage in collaborative activities?

Is empowerment of people at all levels occurring? Who is getting left out?

Are collaborations being built in a way that trust, mutual respect, authentic communication and goal-accomplishment exists among partners?